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THE SPACE GAMER

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THE LAST WORD

This issue catches us up a little bit, and things look good for us to be completely on schedule by the first of the year. Although it isn't a guaranteed certaintity, I plan on using it as the ultimate goal.

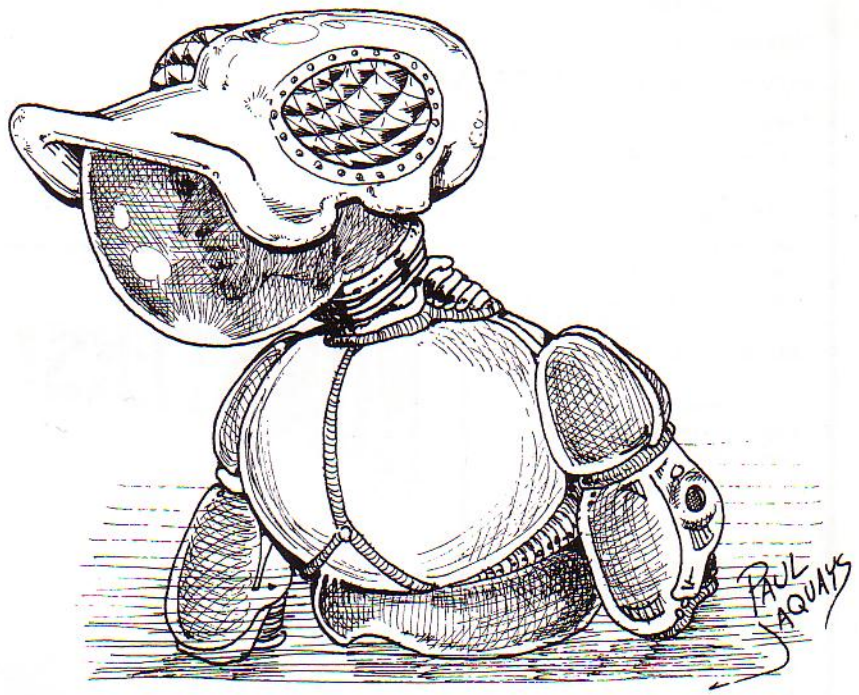
I want to thank all those people out there who voted for *The Space Gamer* for this year's 'Charlie'. I am very happy about winning, and will try to justify this vote of confidence. *TSG* has changed in a great many ways since I first became editor. I am proud of how it looks, reads, and settles in the mind. I owe a great deal to all the people who have incouraged, discouraged, and aided in its various forms. I also must thank the many writers, artists, and most of all, readers who form the basis of each issue.

With winter around the corner, I think it only fair to tell all you readers that now is the time for you to stock up on your back issues of *The Space Gamer.* We have some 13's, more 14's, and plenty of 15, 16, and 17. They cost $1.50 each even though the earliest two were originally $1.00. Sorry, they're collector's items now. Order soon, because it's first come first serve.

I will have a con report from Phoenix in the next issue. It should be in your hands by October 1. I hope so anyway.

P.S. You can order our newest micro any time now. It's ICE WAR and costs $2.95, or $2.50 if you subscribe to this magazine. Tell them Ben sent you.

WHERE WE'RE GOING



Every now and then I get on my soap box and spout off. Ben doesn't let me very often, manuscripts can get "lost". This is soap box time. So, flip the page if such columns irritate you.

Gaming's nigger is the poor wargamer. The lowly gamer shells out from his wallet regularly and gets little recognition. In any get-together of gamers are many who know the names of game designers. Many also know the names of magazine editors. Most gamers even know who runs most of the gaming companies.

How come there ain't no famous gamers? Come on, you've got an hour to think of one. Stumped? Sure you are. Gaming's heroes are designers, publisher's and editors! Nobody is a hero for just playing games.

Now, wait a minute; the whole idea of gaming is to play games, isn't it? Yep, sure is, any group of gamers will agree. We like to play games which is why we buy games. Then, how come all the glory goes to the guys who end up with the gamer's money?

The heroes of tennis play tennis. It's the same for golf, football, chess and any other sport you can name. The actors in sports are the heroes, even if it's horses in horse racing. Why then, waxing rhetorical, aren't the game players the heroes of gaming?

Before answering that, and making the rest of the column pointless, all would agree that those playing the games should have a bigger share of attention. No one would argue that the promoter of the Ali-Spinks rematch should hog the spotlight.

The gamer pays the way for all those others who are "names" in gaming. You pay my rent and bills just as you pay for Gary Gygax, Jim Dunnigan, Thomas Shaw, and Marc Miller. All the game designers get your bucks too. Also, the retailers, printers, distributors, clerical help, and others all live off the gamer.

Most gamers feel they get their money's worth most of the time they buy games. Gamers are not being cheated in the value received department. They are cheated of a fair share of acknowledgement.

No one hogs the show deliberately. No one is trying to keep gamers from acclaim. Why then, again, aren't there gamer heroes? How can gamer heroes come about?

Gamers aren't heroes because there is no meaningful mechanism for comparison. There are no statistics. There are no rated events. There is no valid way Joe Smith of Cleveland can say, "I'm one of the ten best gamers in the country".

There are reasons why there are no comparison methods. Current games haven't been good for accurate judging and reasonable play constraints. There are no guides for timed tournaments. There is no good system for player ratings. Everything will have to be created from scratch.

Gaming can come of age as a sport with at least the public impact of chess. It has all the essential ingredients for success. It does lack a suitable competitive framework.

Things are changing. Stronger gaming groups are developing. The wave of "companyitis" must surely pass. The time should be right to plant the seeds of change.

Metagaming is spending some effort to this end. Frankly, we'll probably make back our expense many times over. If anything can convince the companies to put up prize money and sponsor events, profitability will.

Metagaming expects to sponsor several MicroGame tournaments next year. I expect to sign checks for a few thousand in prize money. Those in the Southwest, at least, can start practicing on their Micros. You'll get your chance next year. Clubs and stores in the Southwest interested in co-sponsoring events should contact Metagaming.

Many will think I'm dreaming. Those are the same guys who sadly underestimate gaming's vast entertainment potential. Chess isn't really fun, just challenging, and look how far it's gotten. Even games like Bridge have to survive mostly on the social value. Gaming has far more potential than that.

The start is to concentrate on the gamer. He is the keystone of gaming's future. Gamers need to become gaming's heroes not for the ego trip but for the general good of gaming.

If we make our goal playing the games and the fun of the gamer we can't miss. Maybe, just maybe, we'll watch Wide World of Sports some Saturday and hear Howard Cosell say . . . "Well, Gipper, I really didn't think that Mark IV could eradicate that second howitzer. Now he's got an imperturbably good probability to obliterate that Command Post."

EVIL, MEAN, AND ROTTEN.

A fantasy game for the bad guys? Yea, verily. MONSTERS! MONSTERS! is the fantasy role-playing game from Metagaming, the folks who brought you MELEE and WIZARD. No more good-guy heroes. In MONSTERS! MONSTERS!, you become a monster character – come up from the dungeons – stalk into a town – and raise a little bit of the old brimstone. The eviller you are, the more experience points you earn.....

Monsters! Monsters! was designed by Ken St. Andre, lavishly illustrated by Liz Danforth, and edited by Steve Jackson of the Metagaming staff.

As with our previous game, *Stellar Conquest*, every effort was made to provide a clear, complete rule system. Major omissions and contradictions that plague other game systems are avoided by a carefully organized format. This is an excellent game for novice Game Masters and new fantasy buffs — and should be a relief for experienced gamers exhausted by confusing rule systems.

Monsters! Monsters! is a 52-page, 8½ by 11 rule book with Danforth's full-color cover. Also included are four maps for the Game Master to use in setting up an initial adventure.

Rules sections include:

- *Introduction*
- *Game Mastering and Setup*
- *Character Creation*
- *Experience Points*
- *Sequence of Play*
- *Combat (including General Discussion, Combat Turn Sequence, Wandering Enemies, Reaction Table, Saving Rolls, Unusual Combat, Unarmed Combat, and Weapons)*
- *Magic*

So put a new twist in your gaming — try *Monsters! Monsters!* Approved as an outlet for antisocial tendencies by the American Psychologists and Crazies Association.

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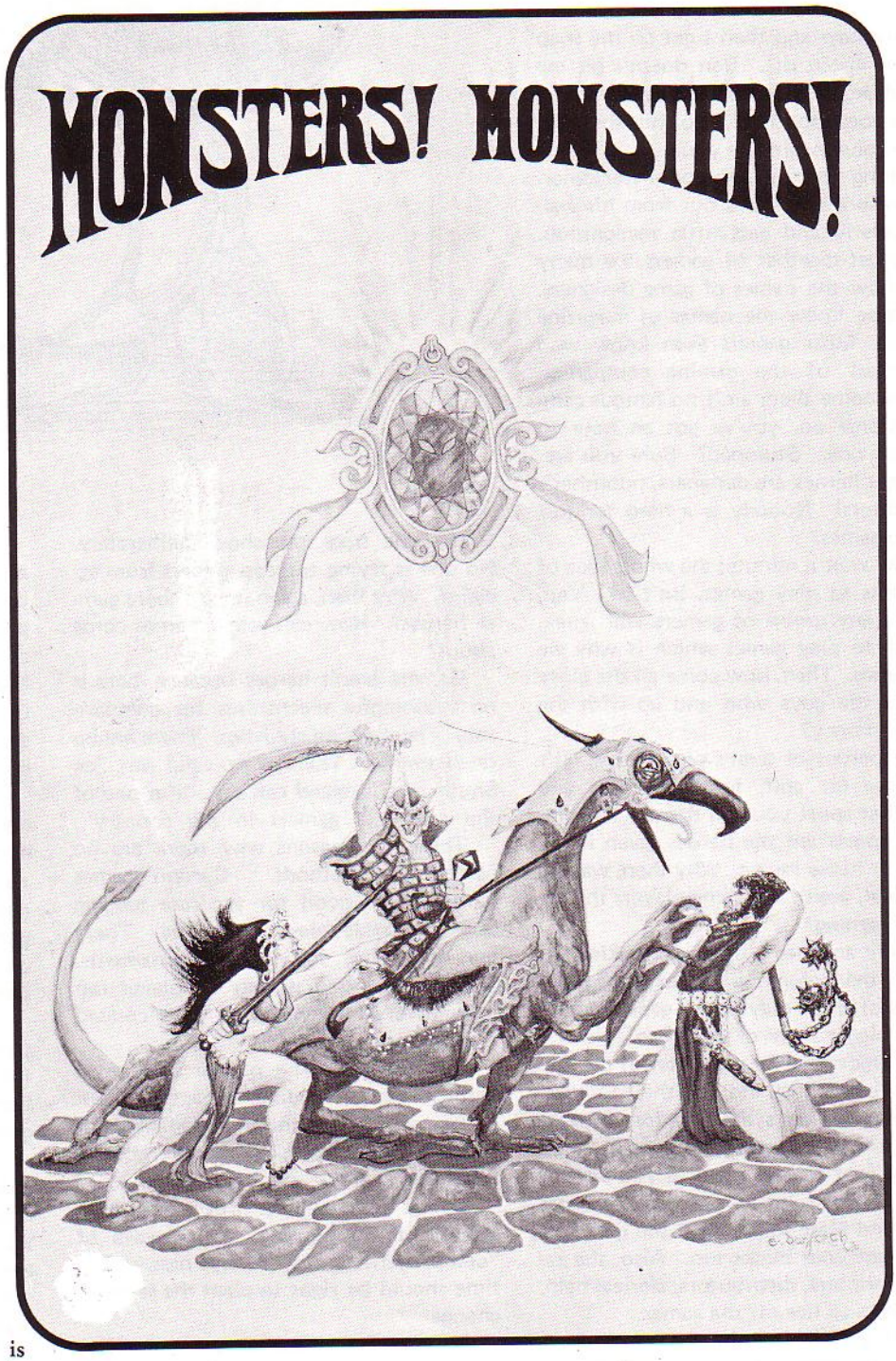

MONSTERS! MONSTERS! is $5.95, but only $4.50 for subscribers to TSG....

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ICE WAR

a designer's introduction

by
Keith Gross

Basically, **ICE WAR** concerns a surprise attack by the Eurasian Socialist Alliance (or Russians, if you prefer) on the Prudhoe Bay oilfields on Alaska's northern coast via the polar ice cap. The battle takes place in January, when the Beaufort Sea to the north of the coast is solidly frozen (though still not an unbroken sheet; units move rather slowly because they must negotiate cracks and presure ridges between ice floes) The ESA attacking force is composed of a mixture of hovercraft and sled-type vehicles, specially designed for crossing ice. The sled-type vehicles are larger and more powerful; however, the hovercraft can cross the open water and mud produced by nuclear explosions. The sleds cannot. Transports of both types can carry tanks and infantry, which provide more firepower for the ESA when and *if* they can be unloaded on land. American forces are centered around tanks, infantry, and hovercraft. These are supported by satellites of several types and by air transport, neither of which are possessed by the ESA. The ESA's raid is essentially a suicide attack, designed to economically cripple the US by destroying its last supply of petroleum.

ICE WAR is set only 30 years in the future, and sits between "contemporary" games, which are based on currently existing weapons and military forces and take place in the very near future (for example, SPI's **WURTZBURG**), and other science fiction games taking place in the far future or on distant planets. The weapons systems and technology must be extensions of existing systems, not totally new and different systems *or* identical to existing systems. The political situations must also be plausible. **OGRE** and **GEV** are based on extensions of modern weaponry. They are much further in the future (2085), are on a much smaller scale than **ICE WAR**, and do not have much to say about the world situation of that time period. A more obvious comparison is with **INVASION: AMERICA**, which, like **ICE WAR**, is set at the turn of the next century. Both games are based on somewhat similar "future histories", in which the United States is at war with most of the rest of the world. Tanks and infantry are still the basic component of armies. Also, basic movement, combat, and zone of control game mechanics are similar, in both cases to provide a simple and familiar game system to players to which other aspects of the game can be added. Many differences exist as well, though. First, of couse, **I:A** is on a strategic scale, **ICE WAR** is operational with 4 hour turns and 12.5 km hexes. **ICE WAR** is the first operational scale, SF game. Secondly, the US is in less dire straits in **ICE WAR's** histroy due to a total victory in an arbital war. Though airpower is very important in **I:A, ICE WAR** postulates it as obsolete due to very advanced SAMs, and thus, **ICE WAR** does not include airpower, except US air transport. Heavy nuclear weapons are absent from **I:A**; in **ICE WAR** they are present but not all-powerful. The US has orbital weapons platforms which launch missiles, as a successor to today's ICBMs and SLBMs. The ESA has medium range missiles fired from mobile missile launcher units. The US has other satellites to destroy the ESA missiles with proton beams; these are being developed now and something like them will probably exist by 2007. They are more effective if they have longer to track their targets; i.e. if the missile is fired from long range. The ESA on the other hand, has advance anti-missiles (and advanced missile technology generally). The ESA force involved in the transpolar raid has mobile ABMs, similar to today s mobile SAMs, which are 67% effective in stopping the missiles from the orbital weapons platforms. (Mobile ABMs are not as implausible as they sound; according to *Jane's Weapons Systems, 1977,* the Soviet Union is currently developing a tactical ABM system.) They do not have the beam weapon technology of the US, and cannot destroy the US satellites, which all carry protection of some sort. These types of technologies allow the general strategic situation which lies behind the battle, and are the basis for **ICE WAR'S** missile rules.

ICE WAR was designed as an interesting and challenging game rather than a realistic simulation of a possible battle in 2007 or of Artic warfare in the future. Several things in the game, such as the US satellites, are simplified and abstracted. Also, hidden movement for the ESA possible should be more limited, or the US recon satellites should have greater capabilities and air reconnaisance should be allowed, if the game is approached from a standpoint of realism alone. However, ESA hidden movement and the corresponding US reconnaisance provide much of the game's flavor, and add to its tactical complexity. A technology which allows the partial screening of infrared radiation from the vehicles' engines can be postulated to make the ESA hidden movement more plausible, though such technology isn't likely to exist by 2007. Moreover, the US is postulated to still be vitally dependent on petroleum. This is possible if today's anti-nuclear movement gains in strength and if research funds for alternative energy sources are cut back. However, explaining why the US hasn't switched to other sources by the fifth year of the war is more difficult.

The background assumptions concerning the military technology and strategic situation in the game are perhaps debatable. However, I am satisfied with **ICE WAR** as a game. The strategies and tactics for both sides are fairly intricate, but quite flexible. The ESA player must decide whether his forces will be centered around missile launchers, or tanks and infantry and their transports, or the mobile firepower of armored hovercraft and armored sleds. The US player must decide whether he will attempt to find the ESA forces through satellites or snowmobile recon units, or deploy outposts to detect them at a distance, or to simply sit back and wait for them, setting up a "beach defense". He must decide whether or not to melt the ice along the coastline; this will aid defense against an attack force built around sleds, but will make no difference against hovercraft and will prevent counterattack against ESA missile launchers. He must also decide how much if any of his forces will be reinforcements, and how his forces will be deployed. Thus, both sides have several viable strategies, and a considerable amount of outguessing one's opponent is involved. The game is, like other MicroGames, reasonably short and rapidly moving.

About the designing of the game . . .

ICE WAR is my first published design. I did the rules editing for **OLYMPICA** and **STICKS & STONES** (now scheduled

ICE WAR'S FUTURE HISTORY

A SHORT HISTORY OF WORLD WAR III AND PRECEDING EVENTS

Late 1970's and early 1980's: African Wars

1982: Arab-Israeli War; Lebanon and west bank of Suez Canal occupied by Israel

1984: Iranian Revolution

1985-86: Soviets began widespread deployment of ABMs in open violation of SALT II; uncontrolled arms race resumes; US lightly deploys ABMs while intensifying beam weapons research

1989-1992: Second Korean War

1990: US Seventh Fleet intervenes in an invasion of Taiwan by China

1991: Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact

1992: Treaty of Belgrade Signed between China and USSR

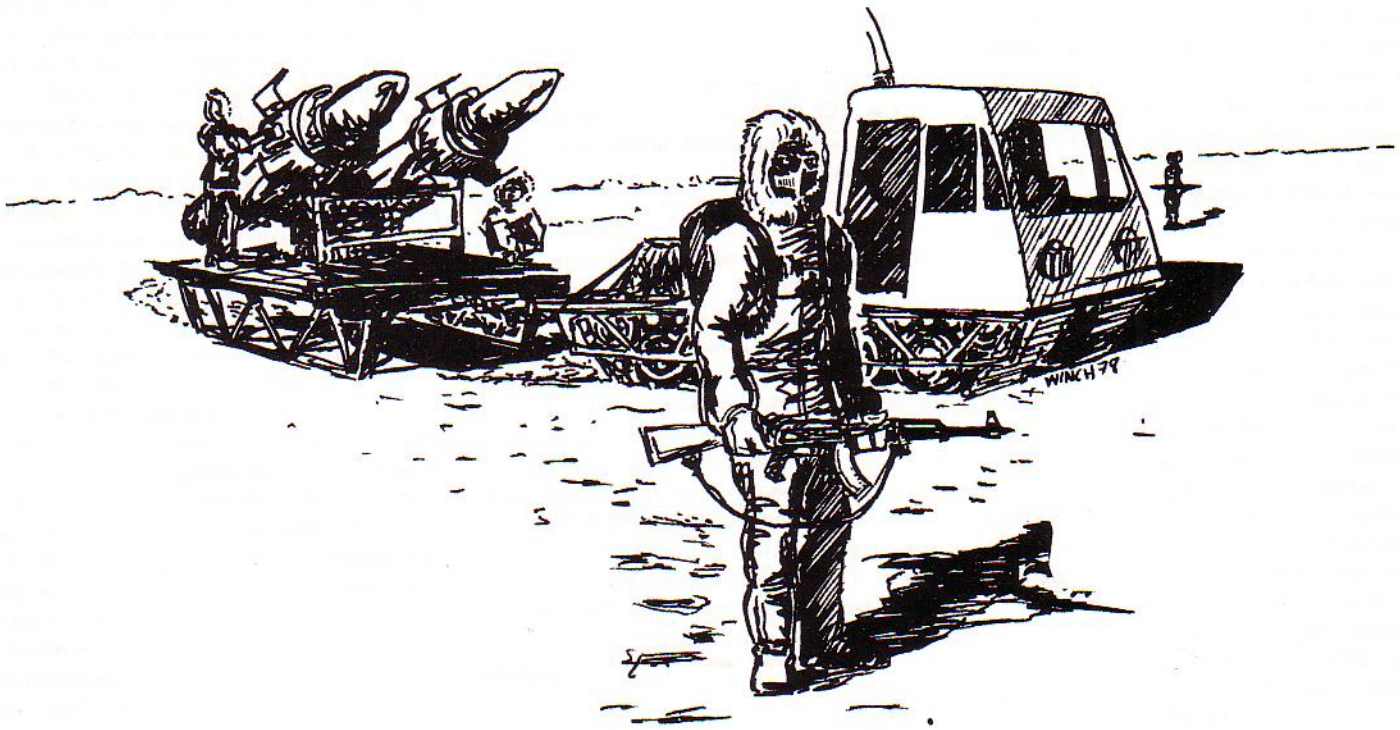
1993: SAM-20 missile developed

1994: Last Arab-Israeli War begins; Arab oil boycott of US

1995: US invasion of Saudi Arabia defeated;
Soviet naval blockade of Eastern Mediterranean;
Israeli nuclear attack on Egypt and Syria; only partially successful due to Soviet ABMs

1996: Jerusalem falls;
Eurasian Socialist Alliance formed between USSR, China, India, Iran, Korea Eastern European nations, and surviving Arab nations

Late 1990's: Revolutions and civil disorder in most Western European nations



2002: ESA forces "intervene" in riots in West Berlin and Frankfurt;
NATO forces crushed;
Other Western European nations (except Britian) also occupied; A short "space war" occurs, but both sides abandon hunter-killer satellites as an uneconomical means of attack, the "space war" ends; both sides replace their losses;
Peace talks are unsuccessful

2003: ESA attack on Japan; a US ultimatum is ignored
The US launches a nuclear strike with all of its ICBMs and SLBMs. At the same time it reveals a network of anti-missile satellites equipped with missile tracking equipment and proton beams to ruin the electronics of ESA missiles. These satellites not only destroy the ESA's counter-strike completely, but also destroy many of its long-range ABMS, allowing about 20% of the US missiles to reach their targets.
All ESA manned and unmanned spacecraft are destroyed. The ESA cannot replace its losses or launch its own anti-satellite weapons because of the anti-missile umbrella and does not possess beam weapon technology advanced enough to allow ground batteries to destroy armored spacecraft
The US begins launching spacecraft of increasing diversity to increase the extent of its umbrella. The ESA improved and expands its short-range ABM defenses.
ESA ground forces overrun Southeast Asia
Indonesia decides to join the ESA

2004: ESA invasion of Britian is unsuccessful, but leaves Britain in ruins due to tactical nuclear weapons. The North Sea oil wells are no longer operational.
Unsuccessful US invasion of Venezuala
ESA develops mobile ABM system

2005: US begins deploying Orbital Weapons Platforms, with a space shuttle resupply system, as a low cost replacement for ECBMs and SLBMs

2005-2006: See-saw campaigns in the South Pacific
Economic strains on both sides from supporting the massive armed forces and from low agricultural productivity due to nuclear fallout. ESA economies also suffer from the effects of the satellite umbrella and the nuclear devastation of many of their cities. Western economies suffer from shortages of natural resources. Widespread famines and rioting occurs, especially in the larger ESA countries

2006: Infrared screens developed by ESA engineers

January, 2007: *ESA's transpolar raid on Alaskan oilfields . . .ICE WAR.*

"....decide how much if any of his forces will be deployed. Thus, both sides have several viable strategies, and a considerable amount of outguessing one's opponent is involved..."

for production after **ICE WAR**), so I knew what a MicroGame was supposed to have. **ICE WAR's** missile rules and "future history" are derived from an earlier, unpublished, larger scale game of mine. Other things in the game were influenced by ideas in Metagaming, SPI, and Avalon Hill games: **OLYMPICA, OGRE, GEV, INVASION: AMERICA, MODERN BATTLES, WORLD WAR III, OIL WAR, MIDWAY, BISMARCK,** and probably others I can't remember.

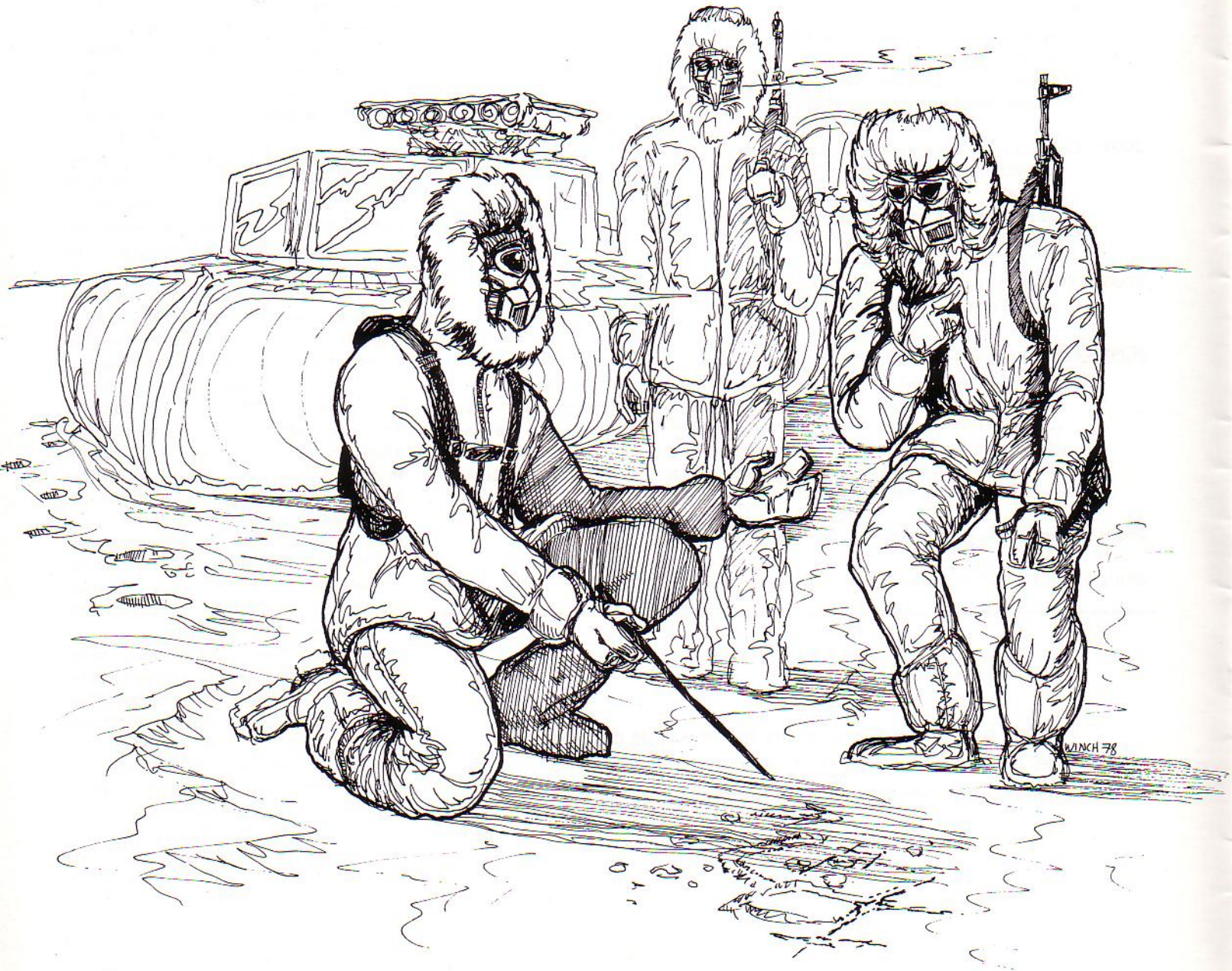
The basic game system of **ICE WAR** remained more or less unchanged after initial development, though additions were made to the game and the rationale behind it. Some research was done before the rules were written to find out about Arctic conditions generally, and to get a rough version of the map. More research was done after the first edition of the rules was composed, to obtain a more complete map, fairly precise information on Arctic Ocean ice condition, weather conditions, Arctic air transportation, and current and under-development missile and anti-missile technology. This research revealed the polar ice to be thinner and the weather less harsh than I had originally believed; the movement rules were changed accordingly. Air units were originally not present at all, because I had believed weather conditions to be too severe to allow extensive air travel in winter. I found that commercial flights into Deadhorse in winter are routine even today, and would be no problem in 2007. Therefore, air transport units were added to the US forces; they added to the strategies of the US player, as well as increasing realism. Advanced SAMs were postulated to explain the lack of fighter-bombers and air recon. The Arctic receives very little precipitation and thus has little cloud cover, so infrared screening devices are necessary to explain the limited capabilities of US recon satellites.

Adjusting the unit strengths, movement factors, and point costs was tricky. Play balance is difficult to obtain when the two sides are very different from one another. Also, care had to be taken that one type of unit was not a bargain relative to others, and that no single clearly superior strategy was possible for either side. I think that the current unit strengths and point costs are reasonable, but players may still wish to adjust them. Point costs for the US and ESA are not necessarily equivalent; the ESA units had to be equipped with infrared screens and ABMs and huge supplies of fuel (or Nu-

clear reactors) to get into the battle in the first place. Point costs reflect a unit's value in the game to its side, not its actual construction cost. For example, a US snowmobile recon unit has the same point cost as an ESA light hovercraft unit, despite the far greater construction cost for the hovercraft. Fast, light units are much more useful to the US than to the ESA, though they should still be available to the ESA. US reinforcement units have ½ the point costs of identical units in the initial set-up.

The optional rules were added last, when the length of the basic rules was known. Many optional rules were tested; some worked and some didn't. The rules for US secrecy, ESA missile types, and US MIRVs were selected because they add new aspects to strategy as well as increasing realism for players who do not mind the added complexity, without taking a great deal of space in the rulebook. Other optional rules that worked might be presented in a future TSG article. I encourage gamers to develop their own variants and scenarios; numerous possibilities exist.

ICE WAR is the newest Micro-Game from Metagaming. It is now available from Metagaming, or your local outlet for Metagaming products. Cost for this great new game is 2.95 ($2.50 for TSG subscriber). Order your copy today!



REFEREE, DECLARE THYSELF!

by
Mark A. Cummings

The wargamer's search for fulfillment and pleasure during his leisure time is one beset with perils and difficulties. Most of these difficulties can be overcome once you become established with a group you like and are compatible with. But, if you are a new wargamer looking for opponents, an old wargamer who has moved to a different city, or an established wargamer looking for someone to play with at a convention, you have a problem. You have no way of knowing what you are getting into ahead of time.

There are a number of problems, all of which have to do with the people you are playing with. While these problems are greatly increased when you are trying to find someone new to play a role-playing game with, they exist in non-role-playing games as well. You cannot, for example, defeat a cheater at **STELLAR CONQUEST.** As a matter of fact, you can't even catch him at it if he is at all clever. And, I'm sure that all experienced war-gamers are familiar with the sore loser, and the unbearable, arrogant winner. You want to avoid both, but you can't avoid them until you've found out what they're like, and you can't find out what they're like without playing them.

While all gaming with unknown persons contains a certain element of risk in terms of having a good time or a rotten wast of time, role playing games are by far the riskiest game to play with an unknown group. Particularly with an unknown referee. If this seems to be a trivial problem to you, I would guess that you either play with the same people all the time, or have been incredible lucky. Personally, I have a very busy schedule, with a limited amount of gaming time. If I blow an afternoon with a bad experience, that's a very real loss to me.

In an effort to solve this problem,I have come up with a method that would go a long way toward removing the uncertainty of playing in a new campaign. If all referees would adopt this system of grading themselves and their campaigns, a new player would have enough data to make an intelligent choice. This system of grading your campaigns can be applied to any role-playing game; historical, fantasy, science fiction, or western. The inspiration for this system came from the **D&D** alignment system (credit given where due).

I. CAMPAIGN ALIGNMENT

This deals with two ideas: how well developed the campaign is, and whether the campaign is *open* or *closed.*

1. OPEN/CLOSED SYSTEM

a) OPEN SYSTEM: In an open system, any player can play any character from any other campaign. One afternoon I played with some new people, and they told me that I could bring along already established characters from another campaign. My friend and I brought along two ninth level magic users (all of my examples will come from fantasy games) that represented over a year of playing on a once a week basis. A week later, these same people came to play in my campaign. I made them start with first level characters. refusing to let them bring characters from other campaigns. I did this because in their campaigns, you could work up to an 18th level character in an incredible short period of time. In my system, no one has yet made it to ninth level, and the ninth level characters represented hundreds of hours of playing. Naturally, it wouldn't be fair to mix, but this is always the referee's decision. It's a good question to ask when playing with strangers. Especially if you're only going to be playing with them for one afternoon, because instead of sending down a first level peon with a bunch of high level types, you might be able to bring down your favorite, high-powered druid. You won't know if you don't ask.

b) PARTIALLY OPEN SYSTEM: Some referees will let some characters cross over into their universe from another universe. Two referees who think alike may even establish a portal between their two universes. The general rule here is that a strict referee will never let anybody from a Monty Hall campaign into his universe. (A Monty Hall campaign is where you find a staff of wizardry on the first floor in a room guarded by two hobbits with broken legs.)

c) CLOSED SYSTEM: No one, but no one enters this universe from another campaign. If you want in, start from scratch.

2. CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

This deals with the amount of work that has gone into the campaign, and the goals a player in that campaign should work toward.

a) WELL DEVELOPED: A campaign that has had a lot of work done on it. There is an organized history. Individual groupings of species (e.g. different tribes of elves) have distinctive customs and cultures. (Woe be unto the ignorant traveller who ignores or violates such customs!) They often have more than one underground/town/planet adventure area. Well developed, non-player characters add to the feel of the game. Such a system is more likely to be closed, although this is not always true. Also, such campaigns have many rewards besides accumulating loot and going up *levels.* In a well developed campaign, a 4th level fighter may do something to win the heart of the king's daughter, thereby acquiring more "clout" in the campaign than an 11th level magician.

b) LIGHTLY DEVELOPED: These

campaigns have more emphasis on action. Sometimes, a person spends as much time working on a lightly developed campaign as they would on a well developed campaign, but the emphasis is different. A referee with a lightly developed campaign will often have his 10th level completed and stocked before he even begins to think about his town. The main thrust of the campaign is adventure, with the accumulation of loot and the increase in personal power to wreak havoc among one's enemies as the major rewards. If a town is built at all, it will be developed only to the extent that it will aid the characters to participate in wilderness or underground adventures. Non-player characters are usually rather two dimensional.

c) UNDEVELOPED: Not really a campaign at all, but more of a game in the traditional sense of the word. Usually the only thing the referee has worked out is the place where the action is. There is very little chance for a player character to develop his unique "game" personality. The goals for players in these campaigns are survival and the accumulation of personal power. Sometimes, these campaigns actually have a way to win. Some referees only allow a player to go up to 12th level or so, and then, the character "retires." The player must then start a new character.

You may have been able to tell by now that I have a bias for well developed, closed systems. I do not want to leave the impression, however, that well developed, closed systems are "right" as opposed to "wrong." The point is that people prefer different systems, and you should play in the system that is "right" for you. So referees may now give their campaign "alignment." I have a well developed, closed system.

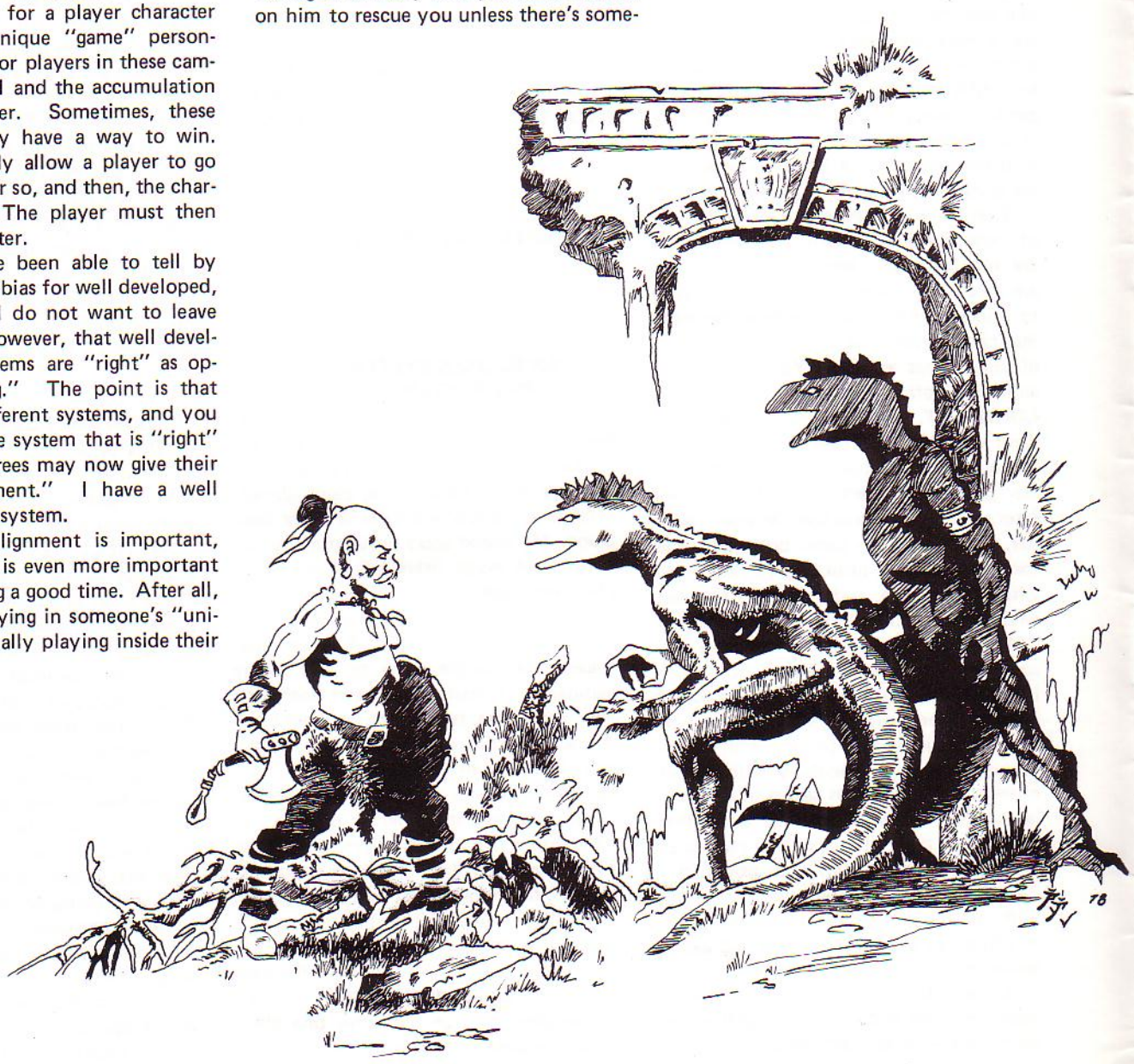
If campaign alignment is important, referee alignment is even more important in terms of having a good time. After all, when you are playing in someone's "universe," you are really playing inside their mind. Therefore, the kind of mind that they have will determine the kind of experience you will have. There are two areas in which a referee may declare his alignment: morality and order.

II. REFEREE ALIGNMENT

1. Morality

a) GOOD: This means you have built into your system a bias for the good guys. In some ways, it is desirable to be good, or at least neutral, as opposed to evil. For instance, the rewards for goodness can be greater, or perhaps the percentages for divine intervention are greater for a good player. My campaign has a good alignment, which is in keeping with my basic, Lawful mental state. That is to say, to my well ordered mind, being evil is fraught with dangers which far outweigh the rewards. For instance, if your evil demi-god is really evil, you can't depend on him to rescue you unless there's something in it for him. He sure ain't gonna do it cause he loves ya! By the same token, comrades are harder to work with when you are evil. It's bad enough to be down in beholder country without being worried about a knife in the back. And of course, if you are a **D&D** freak, there are those cleric spells. Do something nice for a high level, good cleric, and he may just decide to interceed for you in your time of trouble. So in my system, it's easier to be good.

b) AMMORAL: Most of the rule books are set up without bias. For instance, a lawful good can be raised from the dead by his archbishop, but when he meets that wandering evil high priest in the wilderness, he has to stop and inquire as to alignment before attacking. The evil high priest gets the first attack. So things are about even in terms of advantages or disadvantages. If this is true



of your campaign, you have an ammoral campaign. A player could probably do equally well no matter what his religion is.

c) EVIL: Some games are slanted in favor of the bad guys. **MONSTERS! MONSTERS!** for instance, is one game that is hard to ref if you are trying to slant your campaign for the good guys. The whole idea behind the campaign is that evil is more fun, even if it isn't nicer. I have a bias against such campaigns and don't like to play in them myself. Of course, I am a real life cleric, definitely on the side of good. So, I just can't get into wasting an afternoon listening to a band of player characters going into great detail on how they are gang raping the farmer's wife. I also don't get into big torture scenes. I can get into that on the front page of the newspaper. When I play fantasy, I want escape into a world where the good guys are mostly good and the bad guys are mostly bad. If you disagree with me, I won't condemn you to eternal perdition, but I'd rather not game with you. If your campaign makes it easier to be bad, then your campaign alignment is evil.

2. Order

I've saved what is probably the most important until the last. There are three types of order in a campaign.

a) LAWFUL: Things don't just happen. There is always a logical, ordered explanation for what is going on. The players may not understand it, but the campaign proceeds logically, without any major violations of the basic fantasy-natural laws of the campaign. For instance, in my campaign, a dwarf can't use magic. They never developed the capacity. In a lawful campaign, even if it is fantasy, you are not in a place where *anything can happen.* Things can only happen as they agree with the established natural laws of that fantasy world.

b) NEUTRAL: In this world, things follow the natural laws of the fantasy world *most* of the time. My friend runs a world like this. All of the orcs we have ever run into had been just plain old orcs. Except this one time. Those orcs had the Medusea gaze. When three angry, stoned adventurers loudly demanded to know how that could be, they were airly informed that *those* orcs had been "thrown in just to keep us on our toes." His perogative. His world. My dead character.

c) CHAOTIC: I hate to even write about it. In a chaotic world, things do not contradict natural laws, because there aren't any natural laws. The ref can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants. I was on a world like this once, and it was an open campaign. I had been playing my ninth level magic user who has a staff of wizardry. We were in a room fighting orcs when their reinforcements came in. They had phasers, ala Star Ship Enterprise. We won, but just barely, most of the party having been "beamed" to death. On the way up with the loot, one of the players decided on a double cross. He happened to be an android shaped like a garbage can with treads and tentacles, and was immune to almost anything. I finally killed him by hitting him with a passwall and exploding a fireball into his innards. But where did that android body come from? Who knows how to make such things? Could I go there and get a body like that?

There were no answers for my questions. I was in a chaotic universe, not as bad as the total chaos of a Moorcook novel, but too much for me. I am blessed/cursed with a mind that is always asking why and how. For me, to be in a world where there is no answer causes psychological indigestion. Yet my chaotic friends, when they came to play in my Lawful world, were bored stiff. They didn't even care for my friend's neutral world. It's all a matter of temperament.

I would like to think that the next Con I go to would feature people labeling their campaigns, but that probably won't happen. But even if labels aren't used, you should still have some good questions before you sit down at the table in an endeavor to have a pleasant afternoon.

RED GUARD

:a future history scenario

by

David James Ritchie

In 1928, *Amazing Stories* published Philip Nowlan's ARMAGEDDON 2419 A.D. and a new genre was born in American literature: the "America-the-beautiful-in-the-grip-of-Foreign-Devils" genre. In Nowlan's story, Anthony "Buck" Rogers falls asleep in a mineshaft and wakes up in the 25th century just in time to aid in the resurgence of an America ground under the boot of the Warlords of Han. Needless to say, it was the age of the Yellow Peril and Nowlan's story was certainly plausible to a good many Americans. As one phobia has succeeded another, the circumstances have changed, but the masochistic fantasy of America prostrate before an invader has remained a more or less constant theme. Thus, when the crude racism of Yellow Peril polemics became declasse and the "if-we-don't-fight-them-in-Chengtu, we'll-be-fighting-them-in-the-streets-of-Ames, Iowa" mindset was all the rage, the fantasy resurfaced as Robert Heinlein's THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW (among others) The enemy had become a fanatical Commie, but otherwise he remained the same cunning, inscrutable demon.

Now we are seeing a new incarnation of the old paranoia. This time, America is seen to be falling before the advance of hordes of starving third-world untermenschen, mad for fertile farmland and hungry for American womanhood. Among the recent offerings on this theme is SPI's stimulating model. **INVASION: AMERICA.** At last an end to those tedious descriptions of how the invader swept away the valiant defense. Now you can recreate the entire situation yourself on a full-color map of bleeding America. Experience that special thrill of seeing your grinning opponent capture your home town. Quiver in rapturous response to sado-masochistic stimuli as you gleefully surrender one of your least favorite cities to the tender mercies of the P.A.L. Yes, it's all available right here at SPI for only twelve thin dollars.

Actually, SPI has probably done us signal service in publishing **INVASION: AMERICA.** It certainly can't hurt to have this bogey-man of holocaust brought out in the open in a non-literary format . . . and it might just be psychologically healthy to look at this fear which has been an unstated (usually) theme of American foreign policy for 50 years. If we cannot, as a result, see the fear as fantasy, at least we can put the invasion nightmare in perspective. My only quarrel with SPI on this count is that their simulation tends to dwell on the mechanics of the invasion-conquest situation in an intellectual void. There is one scenario dealing with a partisan revolt, but the designer's vision is fixed mostly on the conquest itself. Assuming that the PAS ESC-SAU armies do conquer America, what happens then according to our model? Not an immediate revolt, surely. Then what? Looked at from a non-fantasy standpoint, the key question is setting up a model of this potential future should not be whether an invasion of the American continent could succeed or would be likely, but what would happen in the event of a successful invasion.

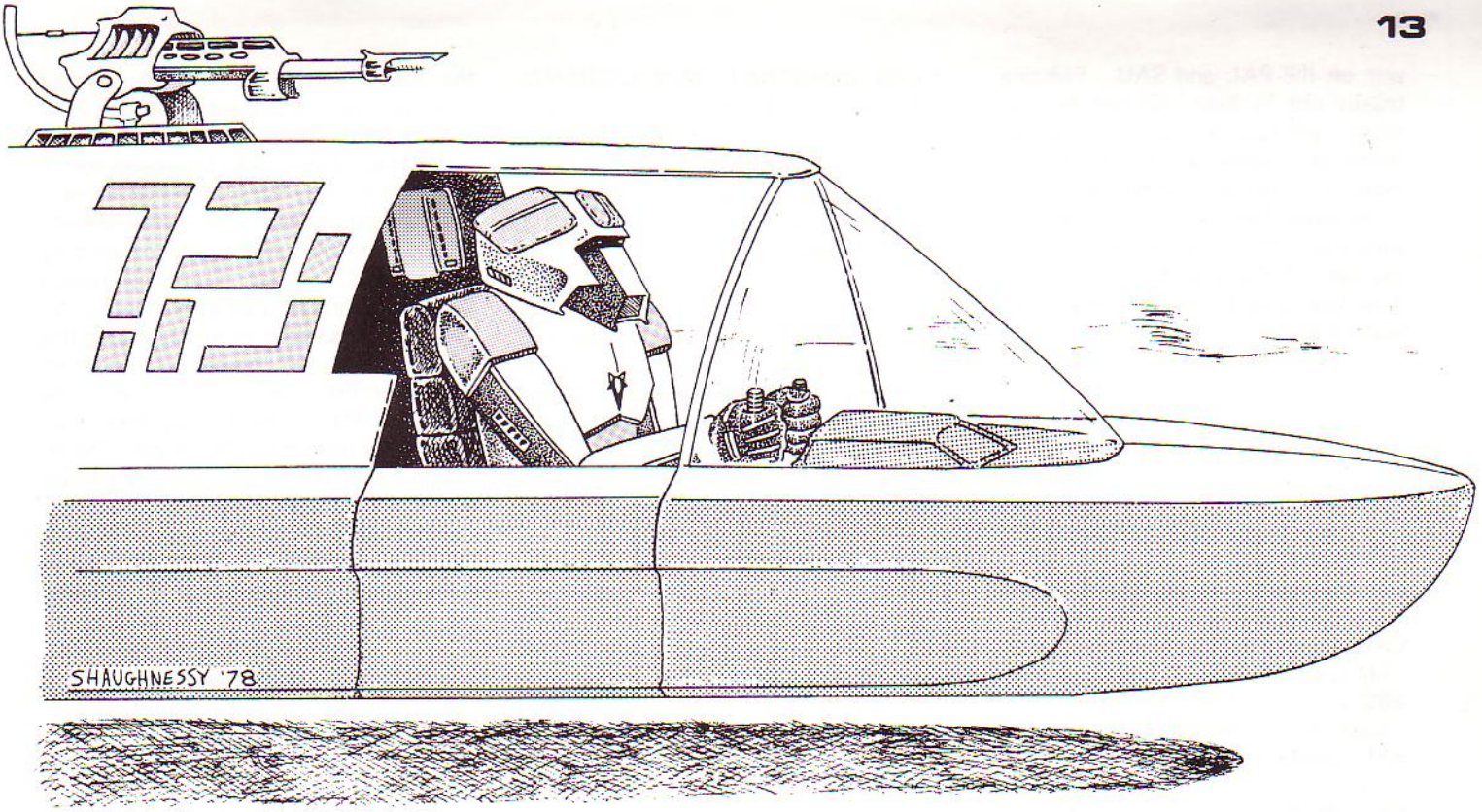
SPI's game is content to deal with the first two questions to one degree or another. The following scenario takes up the third question. The solution offered need not be the only solution or even the best solution, but it is possessed of the virtue of offering at least the possibility of a "happy" ending (i.e. one in which the American people regain their freedom). Certainly, anyone familiar with the Foreign Devils genre must admit that all of the really good yarns of this type end with the recovery of liberty and so should **INVASION: AMERICA.**

SCENARIO RATIONALE

2002: The United States surrenders unconditionally to the combined PAL–ESC–SAU forces, bringing to an end seven years of warfare. At the peace conference in Denver, the provisional government accepts the U.N. "war guilt" clause and agrees to pay 500 billion IMF credits in reparations over a period of 15 years, payment to be made in both currency and kind. Both PAL and ESC forces remian on duty in their respective occupation zones. Parts of Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Nevada and New Mexico are ceeded to the SAU in a massive border rectification. At the behest of the People's Republic of Canada (formed after the collapse of Canadian resistance during the fourth year of war), ESC troops remain on duty in parts of Western Canada to assist local peace-keeping forces.

2003: A continuing anti-partisan campaign leaves many areas of the country depopulated. Famine sweeps the Midwest as the U.N. Reparations Committee orders the forcible export of grain to Old China in expiation of war-crimes. PAL colonists build the first settlements in the Imperial Valley. A revolt by the non-Chicano minority in West Texas is bloodily suppressed.

2005: After three years, the Terror is brought to an end and those few Americans left in the PAL Zone are required to register for resettlement in the giant communal farms of Southern California. An estimated 30 million refugees have fled the PAL Zone for Canadian and ESC-held territory. Continuing guerilla warfare and terrorism keep the northern borders of the SAU in an uproar. Concerned at the lagging pace of reparations, the PAL urges more stringent measures for their collection. The ESC opposes any change in collection methods on the grounds that the famine of '03 has left the American farm industry practically incapable of feeding the country let alone supplying the necessary reparations. ESC leaders take the long view that continued payments in moderate amounts can only be secured by allowing some recovery to take



place. A split begins to form between PAL and ESC.

2006: A resolution submitted by the PAL delegation to the UNRP requests that the ESC either insure prompt and full delivery of reparations items due the PAL or give up occupation of a portion of the ESC Zone. The ESC delegation walks out of the meeting at which the resolution is proposed. The dispute is patched up at a meeting in Geneva between the rival factions, but the seeds of war have been sown.

2008: Increasing acrimony between PAL and ESC leads to a sealing off of the boundary between their respective occupation zones. The ESC begins to recruit domestic units to replace those ESC troops which have been demobilized. The People's Republic of Eastern America declares itself a de facto state and asks to be seated in the United Nations. A PAL veto halts the seating. The SAU joins the PAL side of the debate, charging the ESC with racism and demanding for all non-white emerging nations a fair portion of the products of American agriculture. "One must not," stated the SAU delegate to the U.N., "play politics with hunger. A starving world expects that reparations will be paid."

2009: The first major border clashes take place betweeen PAL and ESC units of regiment size. On behalf of the People's Republic of Eastern America, the ESC submits to the U.N. a resolution condemning the PAL for violation of the U.N. Genocide Convention. ESC-armed guerillas begin to cross the border into SAU territory.

2010: Food shortages in Old China, Greater India, and Old Mexico lead to a joint PAL-SAU demand for ESC cooperation in obtaining Midwestern grain. The ESC promptly orders a cut-off of all grain shipments from America. Reparations, which have been lagging by 50% cease entirely. The ESC and PREA announce that they will not countenance threats against their sovereignty. The PREA announces the formation of the Red Guard, a "people's defense force" designed to protect the internal security of the country from the machinations of deviationist spies.

2011: Repeated attempts at securing a resumption of reparations from the ESC Zone fail. The Canadian Red Army announces that it is doubling its complement in light of the current international situation. On the eve of the PAL-SAU summit in Brazilia, the PAL Committee on Nutrition announces a further cut of 2000 calories in the basic monthly food ration. PAL and SAU sign a mutual defense pact as part of the Brazilia Accords.

2012: ESC, PREA and PRC are joined in a mutual defense pact in reaction to the Brazilia Accords. Border incidents increase as SAU planes begin bombing refugee camps in Eastern American on the grounds that the camps are havens for terrorists. When the Governor General of the Houston District is gunned down by Texan Separatists, the SAU blames ESC-financed "murderers" and announces a break in relations with ESC. PAL follows suit. All factions begin to mobilize forces. The ESC announces that it wishes to keep relations open but that it is tied to Eastern American and Canada by a mutual defense pact. PAL strategists misinterpret the announcement as one of reluctance to intervene and plan an attack against PREA forces scattered thinly across the Great Plains.

2013: With the coming of spring, PAL and SAU armies crash across the Eastern American border, driving back the outnumbered and ill-equipped ESC and PREA divisions of the Rio Grande and Platte Fronts. The ESC declares

war on the PAL and SAU. Fighting breaks out in Asia. Spread far too thinly, the ESC is unable to hold all fronts adequately on its own and so more and more the burden of defense in America falls on the shoulders of American and Canadian troops. By the end of the year the first wholly American army is formed in the Mississippi Valley.

The Red Guard Scenario

(19.71) *INITIAL ORDER OF BATTLE*

U.S.A. UNITS: 6(mi), 8(i), 2(cas), 1 (Irb), 2(rr), 26(m)
CANADIAN UNITS: 6(mi), 6(a), 6(i), 4(m), 2(cas), 2(rr)
ESC UNITS: 12(mi), 6(a), 14(i), 4 (cas), 5(Irb), 6(h)
SAU UNITS: 10(a), 14(mi), 14(i), 4 (cas), 2(Irb)
PAL UNITS: 12(mi), 16(i), 4(si), 3 (h), 8(cas), 4(Irb)

(19.72) *INITIAL DEPLOYMENT*

U.S.A.: Units may deploy anywhere within the Eastern United States. for this purpose, the Eastern United States is bounded on the west by the Mississippi River south of hex row 2600 (inclusive) and by the Rocky Mountains north of that line to the Canadian border (when in doubt, call any non-clear terrain on the western edge of the plains part of the Rockies).

CANADA: Units may deploy anywhere within the boundaries of Canada.

ESC: Units may deploy anywhere within the Eastern United States and Canada.

SAU: Units may deploy anywhere south of hex row 2600 (inclusive and west of the Mississippi (including in the Central American Annexation).

PAL: Units may deploy anywhere in the U.S.A. north of hexrow 2600 and west of the Great Plains (i.e. from the Rockies west to the coast).

NOTE: All units must be deployed in supply within their respective zones. All hexes within each zone are friendly to all forces which set up in that zone. Thus, ESC and US forces could draw supply from the same hex. ESC, US and Canadian units begin the game friendly to one another. ESC units may be transported by rail while friendly to US-Canadian forces.

(19.73) *CONSTANT REPLACEMENTS*

U.S.A.: 1(i), 1(cas), 1(mi), 1(m)
CANADA: 1(i), 1(cas), 1(m)
P.A.L.: 2(i), 1(cas)
S.A.U.: 1(i), 1(cas), 1(mi)
E.S.C.: There are no constant E.S.C. replacements.

(19.74) *VARIABLE REPLACEMENTS*

On every Game-Turn, during the Replacement Phase, one variable replacement each is received by the PAL, ESC, SAU and USA-Canada. Players may choose one unit per force of any type except naval, supply and railroad.

(19.75) *SPECIAL RULES*

1.) Rule 17.1 is not in effect. Otherwise, all **INVASION: AMERICA** rules (including *Special Rules*) are in effect throughout the game.

2.) ESC units draw supply normally via controlled ports. However, ESC and USA-Canadian units are considered friendly to each other at the beginning of the game and are considered to be exercising mutual control of all hexes occupied or controlled by either force. Except for purposes of replacement, all ESC and US-Canadian units are considered members of the same force. All are moved and engaged in combat during the US Player-Turn. There is no ESC Player Turn at the start of the game.

3.) All Militia units are treated as Partisans.

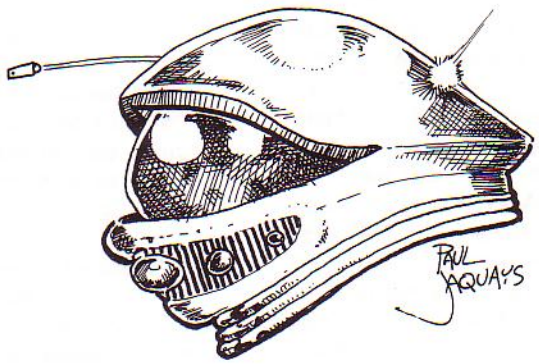
4.) At any point in the game at which the combined total of US-Canadian units on the board is equal to or greater than 5 times the total number of ESC units on the board, the US-Canadian Player may announce that a Second American Revolution has broken out. At that time, all other play stops while the revolution is played out. Any ESC units stacked with US-Canadian units must be immediately attacked by the unit(s) with which they are stacked (only). Ignore all terrain benefits. Treat retreats as exchanges. All units are considered in supply during this activity. When all combat resulting from the revolution has been resolved, the PAL-SAU Player immediately takes control of any remaining ESC forces. The remaining ESC units control only the hexes which they occupy at this time. All other formerly ESC-controlled hexes revert to US-Canadian control. The ESC forces immediately begin to function as a separate Aggressor force.

5.) During the first Game-Turn (only), all PAL-SAU attacks are resolved one column higher than the stated odds on the CRT.

(19.76) *VICTORY CONDITIONS*

The US-Canadian Player wins if, at the end of Game-Turn 36, there are no ESC-SAU-PAL forces within the borders of the continental USA and Canada. Forces in Alaska and the Central American Annexation are ignored for this purpose.

The Aggressor Player wins if the US-Canadian Player fails to achieve his victory conditions. *Note that these victory conditions require that at some point the US-Canadian Player declares that a revolution has taken place, thus losing control of ESC forces.*



THE GREAT NORTHERN WAR

WAR OF THE RING

for 2 to 5 players

by

Glenn Rahman

SPI's **WAR OF THE RING** is a very good game, but it suffers from rules that deny Sauron important options he enjoyed in "real life". Under the standing rules, Sauron lacks the resources to launch his "northern offensive" which was fought simultaneously with the attack on Minas Tirith.

The war in the north was no insignificant skirmishing; the Easterlings drove King Brand into Dale where, aided by Dain II, he fought a three-day battle. The Easterlings had the victory and both northern kings were slain. Erebor was sieged, Thranduil's realm invaded and Lorien assailed from Dol Guldur. With time, Sauron's northern army might have prevailed--but the fall of the Dark Lord insured its rout.

This northern war lends great scope to the war, but it is rare to see it materialize in **WAR OF THE RING.** Bound in the straitjacket of Shadow Point limitations, the Dark Power Player cannot afford to provoke the Men, Dwarves, and Elves of the north until Gondor and Rohan are crushed (an event that seldom comes to pass, for the vast majority of games end in a Ring Victory).

One does not need to play many games of **WOTR** before he begins to yearn to see these never-used northern armies in action. A few optional rules can allow the northern war to blaze, as well as turn **WOTR** into a multi-player game for up to five players.

RULE CHANGES: The Dark Power Player

The forces of Sauron that are deployed at start, via Search and through mobilization above and including the hex row containing hexes 2220W, 3220W, 1620E, etc., require no Shadow Points to move or engage in combat as long as they remain in *that* northern area. The Easterlings (50 strength points) are deployed in Rhun, along the River Running.

Northern Dark Power (DP) army units that move south of the designated hex row always require the expenditure of Shadow Points. Southern DP army units that move north into designated hex row still require a Shadow Point expenditure unless they enter the northern area as "replacements".

Replacements are forces sent from the south to make up battle losses suffered by Sauron's northern army. To be classed as a replacement (and thus be relieved of Shadow Point expenses), the DP combat units must remain in the south until the northern army has suffered losses. Losses are replaced strength point for strength point, the *type* of DP unit (Men, Orcs, Trolls, etc.) being irrelevant.

To have a chance of success, the northern DP armies require a leader. This leader(s) can be the Mouth of Sauron or the Nazgul, deployed and supported by Shadow Points as per the standard rules. Most players will, however, find an additional DP leader convenient. Since the Easterlings must have had a competent leader to defeat two such doughty warrior-kings as Brand and Dain, we propose the leader be called the "Chief of the Easterlings" and that a character counter be made for him. The Chief of the Easterlings is deployed upon the mobilization of the first Easterling unit in Rhun. He shall have a Combat Rating of "3", a Morale Rating of "2", and Endurance Rating of "5" and a Ring Rating of "0". The Chief of the Easterlings must not move out of the northern area of the map unless he becomes a semi-Ring Wraith. He is not killed by army combat.

If there is no separate Saruman Player, Saruman's forces may also be used as replacements for the northern army. The Chief of the Dunlendings may lead only forces belonging to Saruman. The Chief of the Easterlings may not lead Saruman forces. Saruman himself is capable of leading any DP force.

The forces of Dunland do not become part of the original DP northern army, even though they may be mobilized in the northern area.

RULE CHANGES: The Fellowship Player

The units of the Northern Alliance (the Western Allies, Dwarves, Elves) mobilize if attacked by the DP Player, as per the standard rules. They may also be mobilized by a proper die roll after the mobilization of Sauron. The Fellowship player makes a roll prior to his movement phase, in each turn subsequent to Sauron's mobilization. If he achieves the result of "6", the north mobilizes.

Forces of the Northern Alliance may move and fight as the Fellowship Player desires. If, however, Galadriel's Palace or Thranduil's Palace is captured by the DP Player, Elves have zero combat strength on attack if fighting army combat in the south. Elves fighting at zero combat strength are ignored when calculating losses.

Celeborn and Thranduil may possess the Magic Cards deployed in the two Elf palaces once they are mobilized.

THE TWO–PLAYER GAME

In a game of Fellowship vs. Dark Lord (no separate Saruman Player), the Dark Power Player wins the game if he achieves a Ring Victory, or if either Gandalf or

Aragorn become semi-Ring Wraiths. He wins via military victory if he is able to capture four of these five objectives: Hobbiton, Thranduil's Palace, Helm's Deep, Minas Tirith and Dol Amroth. He must, of course, also be in possession of Barad-dur.

The Fellowship player may win via Ring Victory, or by preventing the capture of four of the above-mentioned objectives and seizing Sauron's Barad-dur. If neither player achieves his victory conditions, the game is a tie.

THE THREE PLAYER GAME

In the three player game, there is a Fellowship Player and two Dark Power Players. The DP commander of the south shall be called the Sauron Player; the commander of the south shall be called the Sauron Player; the commander of the northern army shall be called the Easterling Player.

The two DP Players are equal; neither is subordinate to the other. They share a simultaneous game turn and the armies under their command may combine to fight joint combat against the Fellowship Player.

The Easterling Player's army (that deployed north of the designated hex row) requires no Shadow Points to move, as per the two-player game above. All replacements arriving north also come into his control. There is no way, however, that he can directly force the Sauron Player to send him replacements.

Any Easterling-controlled armies "going south", fall into the control of the Sauron Player, who may use them with the proper expenditure of Shadow points. The Sauron Player may later return them to his northern ally if he chooses.

The Chief of the Easterlings must stay in the north of the map unless he becomes a semi-Ring Wraith, upon which his control falls to the Sauron Player.

The Sauron Player may temporarily turn over control of the Mouth of Sauron, Saruman, or the Chief of the Dunlendings to the Easterling Player. But the Sauron Player may terminate the loan at the beginning of any DP movement phase. Nazgul may command battles where the Easterling Player's forces are engaged, but the Sauron Player must move and pay Shadow Point costs for the Nazgul himself.

The victory conditions for the Fellowship player do not differ from those described in the two-player game.

The non-military type victories for the DP players do not differ from those of the two-player game. To achieve a military victory, the team must retain control of Barad-dur, capture Hobbiton and Thranduil's Palace, and capture *two* of the three Fellowship citadels: Minas Tirith, Helm's Deep and Dol Amroth.

Even if the game ends in a draw or loss for the DP team as a whole, the Easterling is able to win a Player Victory if he is in possession of Hobbiton and Thranduil's Palace when the game ends.

THE FOUR–PLAYER GAME

In the four-player game, there are two Fellowship and two Dark Power players. The Fellowship Player in charge of the northern armies (controlling the Western Allies, Dwarves, and Elves) shall be called the Northern Alliance Player. The Fellowship Player in charge of the nine Fellowship characters, Gondor and Rohan may continue to be called the Fellowship Player.

In the four-player game, the DP Players follow the rules and objectives of the three-player game. The two Fellowship Players share a relationship similiar to the DP team.

All Fellowship armies that are deployed or moved north into the hex row containing hexes 2220W, 3220W, 1620E, etc., are controlled by the Fellowship Player. Control does not change until the end of the joint Fellowship turn, but units controlled by different players may freely combine for combat.

Leaders belonging to different Fellowship Players may be loaned, subject to recall at the beginning of any Fellowship movement phase.

The Fellowship team may win the game either by a Ring or a military victory. The team-military-victory conditions are unchanged from those of the two-player game. However, even if the Fellowship draws or loses as a team, it is still possible for the Northern Alliance Player to achieve a Player Victory. A Player Victory requires that the Northern Alliance Player be in control of Thranduil's Palace, Hobbiton and Dol Guldur at the time the game ends.

THE FIVE–PLAYER GAME

The fifth player in the five-player game is Saruman. Actually a separate Saruman Player can participate in any version of the Northern War. Consult the standard rules for the option of Saruman as a separate player. If Saruman, as a wizard, fails to gain his victory conditions (possession of the Ring, all surviving Nazgul, Isengard, Helm's Deep and Edoras), Saruman as a *player* can at least manage a Player Victory. To do so, he must hold the citadel of Isengard and Hobbiton, while seeing that neither the Fellowship nor Dark Power achieve their victory conditions, other than possible Player Victories.

More Harmony for Fists in MELEE

by

Ronald Pehr

There is definitely a place in **MELEE/WIZARD** for HtH combat on a more sophisticated level than the roll-around-biting-and-scratching-while-reaching-for-your-knife that the current rules provide. For most situations, the combined **MELEE/WIZARD** rules do reflect the state of the art of unarmed combat. Most combatants, including those trained to be Warriors, would deal with unarmed situations as the rules have it. Archaic Warriors put in far more time at weaponry than at unarmed training. In ye good olde days, as today, unarmed combat training emphasized physical stamina, speed, and ferocity. Remember that the winner of a duel between armed and unarmed Warriors of equal ability is likely going to be the former.

I would like to suggest some modifications of the rules for martial arts proposed by David James Ritchie in TSG No. 16.

1) Warriors and Wizards with "traditional" training would use the **MELEE** HtH rules, except that Wizards never do more than 1 die--4 pts. damage.

2) Warriors on their feet can punch or kick into the next hex, as per the **WIZARD** rules, at 1 die--3 pts. damage, regardless of relative strength.

3) The damage chart in David's article should only be used by those characters expressly designated as martial artists/oriental boxers/unarmed combat specialists. Only someone with great skill could use his strength to do as much damage as ordinary Warriors (even strong ones) do with swords or morning stars. Players might want a standard Martial Artist *type* character, as an experimental alternative to armed/armored Warriors. This would be a figure with ST and DX decided as for a Warrior, but the character would *not* be allowed armor or weapons.

If enough situations occur where ordinary Warriors slug it out barehanded while on their feet, perhaps the variable damage for strength from **MELEE** HtH rules could be used.

SELF–DAMAGE: There should always be a chance of this when striking at armored foes. The character would always miss on rolls of 16-18, doing damage as follows:

When striking plate and large shield--damage on roll of 15 (this is otherwise a hit, if attackers Adj. DX allows).

When striking plate and small shield or chain and large shield on a roll of 16.

When striking plate or chain on a roll of 17 or 18.

The damage incurred should be 1 die--2 pts. for all attackers, regardless of ST and, of course, *is unabsorbed* by the attacker's own armor.

As might be imagined, there is a greater chance of missing when striking barehanded at armored foes.

SAVING THROW: In addition to the ability to Charge Attack, Shift and Defend barehanded, and deflect thrown weapons, the Martial Artist should be able to deflect arrows on a Save against DX with 4 dice. (Yes, I know this is nearly impossible, but this *is* a fantasy wargame--or do you all really believe in Orcs?)

PASSIVE SELF–DEFENSE: It will be up to the players to decide how passive the character is. A true Monk-type might be obligated to do no more than throw an opponent and never strike, but "passive" self-defense moves would be employed by Warriors or Martial Arts Specialists (e.g. Samauri) as part of their training. Rules for use of these characters in **MELEE/WIZARD** should include:

1) The defender must make his die roll "to Hit" as if he were striking. Just because you are attacked doesn't mean you necessarily perform the throw properly to dump the attacker into an adjacent hex.

2) If the attacker strikes first and connects, passive self-defense technique cannot be used that round.

3) A thrown attacker must Save against DX on 3 dice (Unadjusted), or suffer damage as if he had been engaged in HtH. This is unabsorbed by his armor.

4) If HtH is elected, the opponent of the self-defense master does not gain the +4 to Adj. DX. Damage in HtH given by the master will be as in standard rules. This may be presumed to be arm-locks, chokes, etc.

ORIENTAL WEAPONRY: Special bonuses and abilities of oriental weaponry should only accrue to characters trained to use them. It is up to players if their world allows anything conceived of for any character, or if the players are obliged to use weapons typical of a historical or mythical culture. If all your duels take place in Ancient Rome or Middle Earth, there's nary a nunchaku to be had. Would Solomon Kane discard his trusty rapier for a manrikigusari? Some modifications suggested-

Kendo is Japanese fencing, a sport rather than a weapon name. The wooden sword used should do only 1 die damage, but allow the disarm at only -2 DX.

Katana, the large Samauri sword, should add one to the user's Adj. DX. Samauri tended to strike at the vital areas with precision, rather than just slash away.

Bokken is a wooden Katana, ideal for practice. It should also add one to Adj. DX, but do only 1 die damage. ST=10.

Sai should do only 1 die--2 pts. damage (at best), but can be used in HtH, disarm at only -2 DX, *and* absorb damage of 1 pt. as a small shield.

Tonfa should also absorb damage as a small shield, but should do only 1 die--1 pt. damage. Tonfa differ from clubs in being lighter, and in the handle on the side allowing them to be rotated to block blows.

Nunchaku should not do any more damage when thrown than a club does. They should do 2 dice + 2 pts. at regular striking, and 1 die in HtH, with ST=11. However, in addition, they should add *2* to Adj. DX (they are very difficult to defend against) *or* add nothing to DX but allow you to Attack and Defend at the same time.

Manrikigusari should do only 2 dice--1 pt. damage striking, but could be used in HtH for strangling, doing 1 die--2 pts. damage.

Traveller

addendum equipment & weapons

by

Robert P. Barger

(illustrations by author)

I think almost everyone is in agreement on **TRAVELLER** being the best SF role-playing game published to date. I have had a lot of fun with it, and during all those campaigns, I have had the urge to add various equipment and weapons to the tables in my **TRAVELLER** notebooks, weapons and equipment that appear in several of my favorite SF novels and stories.

Probably the most obvious thing missing from the **TRAVELLER** rules is laser pistols. Goodness! Everyone from Hawk Carse to Luke Skywalker has had a laser pistol, or at least some sort of beamed energy handgun at his or her disposal. In my universe, the average character can be expected to be able to purchase, on a suitably high technology planet and with the proper permits, a laser pistol that will do anything a laser pistol out of traditional SF ought to do: burn BEMs, drill holes through the baddies, and just generally make the Galaxy safer for the Good Guys (or Bad Guys, depending on your character's moral standards).

A laser pistol has a DM of +1 at close range, a +3 at short range, -3 at medium range, -4 at long range, and at very long range (in atmosphere), no hit is possible. But in vacuum, with no air to be ionized by the blast and thus diminish the beam's energy, one could, at least in theory, make a hit at even very long range. Thus, DM at very long range, in vacuum only, is -8. A character will have to be very very lucky or very very good, and most likely both, to make a hit.

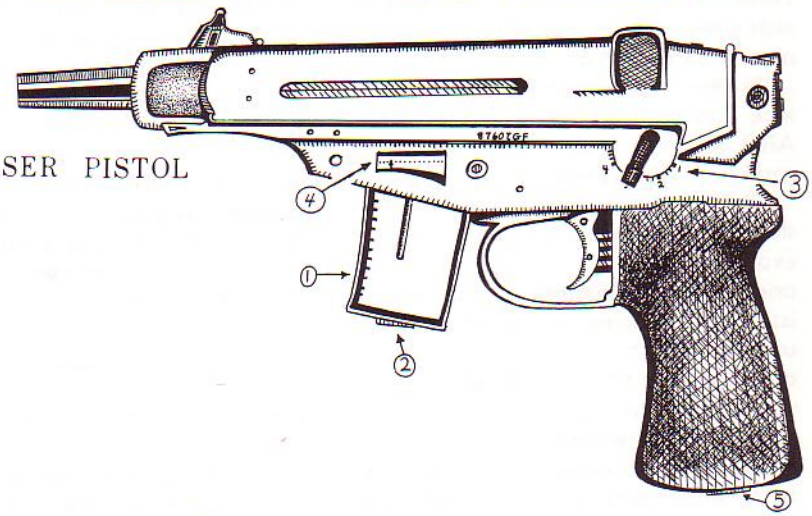
Laser rifles and carbines should really be treated in a similar manner when in vacuum. Lasers should, after all, be much easier to aim since there is no problem of ballistics and most especially no recoil (in zero gee there is little or no ballistics problem to consider with normal guns, thus characters used to aiming above their targets in gee fields, may or may not have their reactions confused when firing standard firearms in vacuum where the bullets do not drop; lasers and characters using them will not be affected by zero gee. A laser beam is a straight line on planet, or off. But, all this is up to the individual Game Master. And anyway, if a Game Master is creative enough in his planets and societies, not many characters will want to adventure out in the cold, lonesome vacuum of space.

A laser pistol requires a dexterity of 8, has a required dexterity DM of -3, and an advantageous dexterity level of 11. The advantageous dexterity DM is +2.

A laser pistol costs 2,000 CR and masses 1500 grams. It contains an internal, un-removable, rechargable energy clip which contains enough energy for 10 full strength shots. The large and bulky powerpacks of the laser rifles and carbines may be adapted to fit pistols (an adaptor is needed), or a powerpack may be bought especially for a laser pistol. This powerpack is identical to that of the laser carbine, except that the purchaser has the option of the powerpack being either in the standard backpack form as in the case of the long laser weapons, or in a broad belt which is more easily concealed under clothing. This belt will not interfere with the use of a vacc-suit. Many times characters will wish to use laser rifles or carbines while in vacc-suits. This is something I don't usually allow without special preparation by the character. Consider: it is traditional for vacc-suits to have their lifesupport systems in the form of backpacks. It was like that in SF in the 30's, and on the Moon in the 70's. So where does the backpack for a laser rifle or carbine go? On the chest? But, that is traditionally reserved for suit controls and communication devices. Where then does one strap the powerpack to a laser weapon when in a vacc-suit?

The pistol's belt powerpack solves the problem, and I also allow laser carbines and rifles to be plugged into such powerpacks, provided they have suitable adaptors attached. A belt-pack does not inter-

BASIC LASER PISTOL



1. Ten round clip
2. Recharging port for clip
3. Blast intensity setting
4. Charge indicator
5. Port for attachment of 50 round powerpack

fere with either the wearing of the vacc-suit or the movements of a character. For a character trying to lug around a laser rifle and its backpack powerpack in a vacc-suit, I generally decrease his vacc-suit skill by "1".

Laser pistols do 4D damage (the same as laser carbines). But, laser pistols have adjustable fire controls, and a character can decide before he pulls the trigger just how many dice (up to the maximum allowable of 4D) damage he wishes to inflict on the target. For instance, the pistol user might decide to thumb the weapon to its lowest setting and only do 1D damage on the target, or thumb the selector to the maximum 4D, and inflict 4D damage if the target is hit.

The idea here is that a hit by a 4D blast will many times kill, while lesser blasts will sometimes only reduce one of an opponent's attributes to "0", thus rendering him unconscious. The equivalent of Mr. Spock setting his phaser on "stun". I recommend all laser weapons be given the ability to vary the intensity of their shots, since this sometimes adds a very interesting feature to the game.

Each combat round, a character can change the intensity of the weapon's fire. It is much too confusing to make a player take a combat turn to change the setting on his weapon, and anyway, unlike Spock's badly designed phaser which needs both hands to change the intensity setting, it is only logical to assume the weapons of the future will be as well designed as those of today: a mere flick of the thumb or trigger finger should be all that is needed to switch settings on a weapon. (A Game Master who is a realism nut might add a DM of -1 for the slight wavering of the weapon as the little switch is flipped to a new setting, but certainly no more.)

Each die of potential damage is considered to be energy. I.e., a laser rifle powerpack contains enough energy for 100 5D shots, or potentially 500D of damage. A laser pistol's internal energy clip holds 10 shots as mentioned before, each shot (if it connects) being worth 4D damage. Therefore, if a character wanted, he or she could dish out the contents of his pistol's self-contained clip in 10 4D blasts, or 40 1D blasts, or anything in -between.

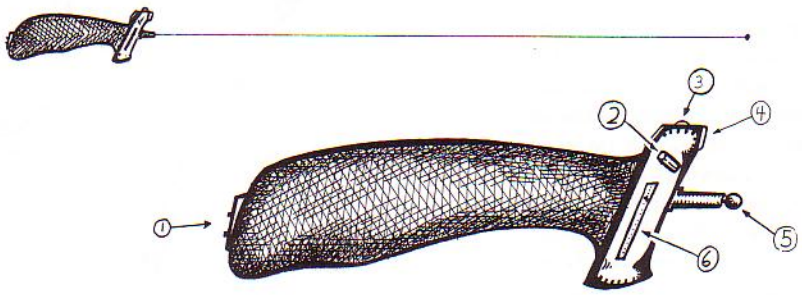
Suppose Dirk Broadbent is walking down a jungle trail and is suddenly confronted by a small, deadly Vagan spider-snake. Should he whip up his laser pistol and blow said spider-snake away, taking along with it 4D worth of his precious laser clip's energy supply (which is already half depleted from a previous run-in with some screaming nergabats earlier in the day) not to mention also blowing away half the rare bornoeclyptus tree from which the spider-snake was dangling, and thereby enraging the environmentalists of Vega III--or should he quickly flick his power setting to 1D and blow the critter's head off, thus saving his pistol's precious energy and keeping the environmentalists off his back (that is, unless they find out he has shot a specimen of the near-extinct spider-snake)?

Remember, Dirk still has 40 miles of jungle to traverse before he makes it to the nearest Federation outpost, and saving energy in his small clip could be very important, I like this idea of variable power for lasers because it adds to the game's potential for recreating the almost cliche', but nevertheless enjoyable situation of the protagonist having an almost all-pwerful weapon, but having to carefully conserve the use of its limited energy supply.

In an emergency, a laser pistol's internal clip can be recharged in one combat round by plugging it into a powerpack from a laser rifle or carbine or even pistol. Though for the rifle and carbine powerpacks, an adaptor is needed. Laser pistols are normally recharged at one's leisure at any electrical power source and cost is only 25 cr or so . . .

Another weapon I like, this one taken from Larry Niven's books, is the variable sword. This weapon consists of a pommel and hilt similar to that of a normal sword, but contains a battery, force-field generator, and an almost microscopic metal filament. The filament is unwound by pressing a stud on the grip, and given rigidity by the force-field it can slice through almost anything, from human beings to gun barrels. The Game Master must use his common sense in deciding upon just what a variable sword can and cannot cut through. Such a sword is very light, strong, and durable. A **very** strong man could cut through anything short of hull metal with one. But variable swords take a lot of energy, and can only be used for 10 combat rounds before recharging is needed (much like laser rifles, though only at about one tenth the cost). Base weight is 400 grams, length is 15 mm retracted to 1200 mm fully extended. It does damage against most targets, including armored humans. Nothing short of full battle armor has any effect on its destructive effects. Unlike other cutting weapons, strength does not determine one's ability with a variable sword. Variable swords require a dexterity of 8, and have a required dexterity DM of -3, an advantageous dexterity level of 11, with an advantageous dexterity DM of +1. If the user's dexterity is less

STANDARD VARIABLE SWORD



1. Recharge port
2. Safety catch
3. Energize button
4. Laser beam projector for night fighting
5. Knob for day fighting (you see, the "blade" is virtually invisible and something is needed to show its location)
6. Charge indicator

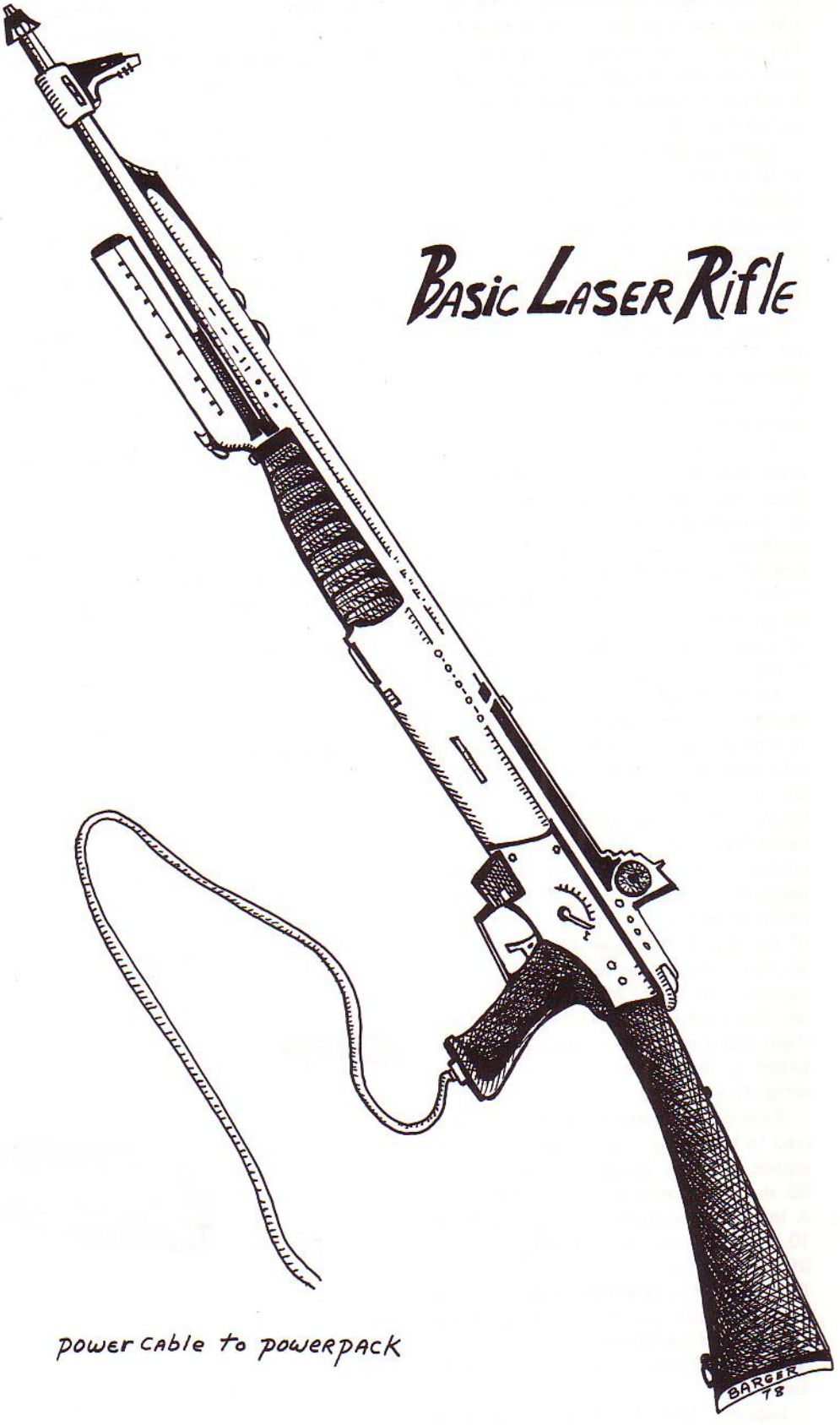
than the required 8, each combat round conducted at close range requires that character to make a saving roll to keep from cutting himself with the weapon's nearly invisible blade. Roll 8+ with expertise a positive DM. If the character cuts himself, it is only 1D damage, rather than the full 4D. Close range DM is -1, short +4, and farther than that, forget it.

Variable swords are easily hidden and concealed. They are illegal for civilian ownership on all worlds, though similiar instruments can be found in industries which use a similiar principle and can be stolen, bought, or converted. The variable sword is the standard side arm of all Marine officers of rank Major or higher, and all scouts who survive three or more terms, (or such is the case in my universe).

And last but not least, a major piece of equipment that no self-respecting asteroid miner or space pirate would be without: a skin-tight vacc-suit.

A skin-tight vacc-suit, or vac-skin, is simply that: a second skin of superstrong, super-tight bodystocking from the neck to toes (and individual toes in the garment for each of the wearer's toes too, else they be uncomfortably scrunched up as in a too tight pair of shoes). Each character's vac-skin must be tailored to his or her individual body, and only he or she can wear it. It takes approximately 30 minutes to struggle into a vac-skin but when worn, it increases the wearer's vacc-suit skill by "1". This is because such a suit allows a character complete and unrestricted freedom of movement, and as an added bonus, it can be worn under any other clothing.

A vac-skin can be used with all standard makes of space helmets and life support systems, but it offers less than adequate insulation from heavy radiation and in such cases reflec should be worn over the vac-skin. Vac-skins are temperature controlled, but do not come with helmet or life support. There is a deluxe model which comes completely outfitted, from magnetic boots and helmet and life support, to laser pistol and sanitary attachments. A deluxe vac-skin can be worn for an indefinite period of time without discomfort. A punctured vac-skin is quickly sealed with a patch/bandage, since the suit can hardly be punctured without human skin and tissue also being punctured. Price for a regular vac-skin if 15,000 cr, while a deluxe model costs 30,000.



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MOUNTED MELEE

BY

Charles A. Lindley

While **MELEE** is a fine simulation of archaic weapons combat, its scope excludes the most devastating weapons system of medieval times: cavalry. These rules allow for use of such in affrays played on large hexsheets.

GENERAL

The turn is split into two parts, the Horse phase and the Ground phase. Horse movement, and combats initiated by horsemen are executed during the Horse phase, while all other normal **MELEE** procedures occur in the Ground phase.

The Horse phase is *not* divided into discrete segments of movement and combat. Combat occurs in the course of movement, simulating the flow of mounted fighting.

HORSE MOVEMENT

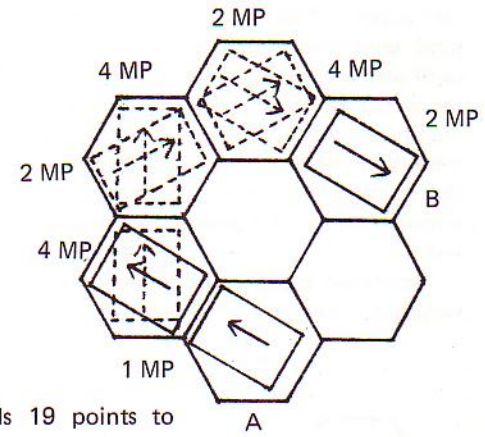
The horse is a two-hex figure; riders are situated in the forward hex. For movement purposes, ignore the rear hex; it can be attacked, and opponents may not stack with it, but that is all. Uninjured, unarmored horses have a maximum MA of 20 points. Roll for initiative at the start of the Horse phase; winner decides which side moves first. That player may move each of his horses up to the limit of their allowances, though movement may be interrupted any number of times for combat (see below). A horse may only be moved into its direct forward hex (exceptions below).

A horse may be in one of two movement modes, Slow or Fast. Each mode has different effects on movement and combat.

Slow mode is MA zero to five. When in Slow mode, a horseman may move up to five hexes in a Horse phase, or remain stationary. He may also change facing at any time during movement and as many times as desired with no cost in movement points.

Fast mode is MA 6 to 20. When in Fast mode a horsemen **must** expend between 6 and 20 movement points (not hexes).

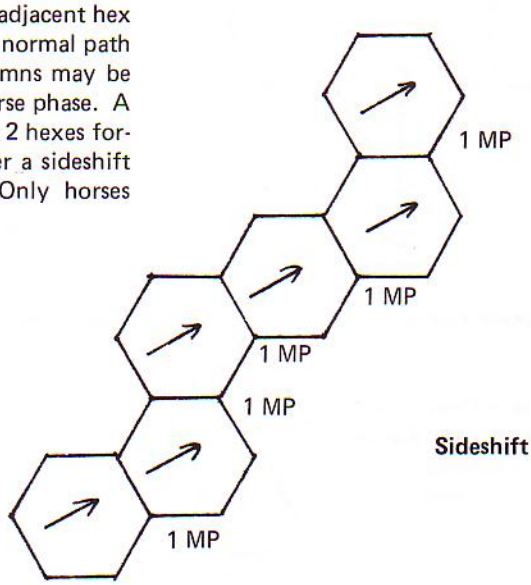
In FM (fast mode), it costs 4 MP to change facing by one hexside. When facing is changed in this way, the new direct forward hex must be entered at a cost of 2 MP. This hex may be entered automatically if the horseman has no MP left after changing facing.



Example:
Horse in FM expends 19 points to go from A to B.

Note: For clarity, only the forward half of the horse is shown here.

A special exception to the move-into-front-hex-only rule is "sideshifting." A horseman may shift into the adjacent hex column at a 60° angle to its normal path for 1 MP. A total of 3 columns may be shifted in this fashion per Horse phase. A horseman must move at least 2 hexes forward in the new column after a sideshift before sideshifting again. Only horses in FM may sideshift.



Sideshift example

To shift from Slow mode to Fast mode, a horseman must move in a straight line through 5 hexes, and announce his intention of shifting. To shift from FM to SM 5 movement points must be expended in any way desired. (It is recommended that players use extra counters to keep track of which horses are in FM.)

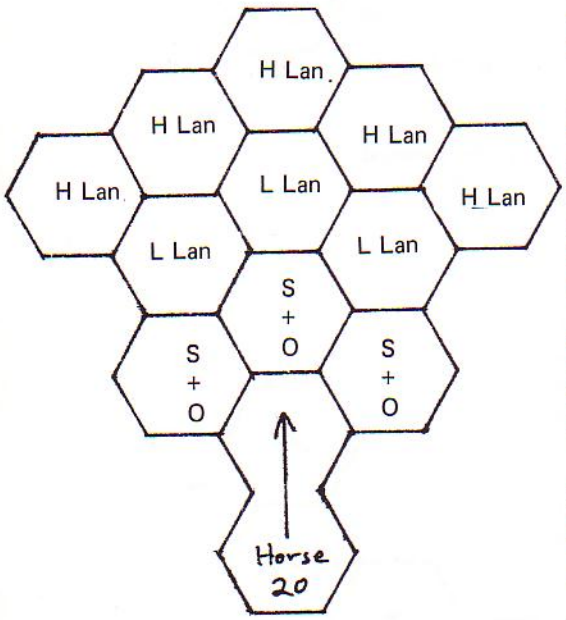
A horseman may unsling and ready a shield at any time during movement in the Horse phase.

Horses cannot be "rammed" into one another.

HORSE COMBAT

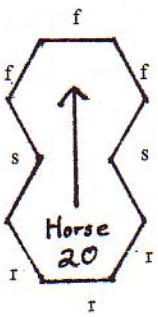
When an opposing man or horseman occupies one of a horseman's "engagement hexes" during movement, combat can occur. That horseman's movement (and all horse movement) is suspended until any combat is resolved. (Note: this can occur any time, and many times during movement). Since movement resumes after such combats are resolved, players should note how many movement points a horseman has left before resolving combat.

Horseman engagement hexes vary with weapons, and are mutually exclusive.



Engagement hexes

Key:
H Lan = Heavy Lance
L Lan = Light Lance
S = Spear
O = Other



When a horseman and opponent are in each other's engagement hexes during the Horse phase, and both wish to attack, the fighter with the higher DX goes first.

If a horseman moves into a front hex of an unmounted fighter during the Horse phase, that fighter may attack the rider, or his horse. Riders and horses in FM may only be attacked through the horse's front hexsides. Attacks against horses in SM may come through any hexside, and the usual DX bonuses for side and rear attacks apply. Attacks on riders are *always* at DX -2. Attacks on horses accrue a +1 DX bonus. A fighter who attacks in the Horse phase may do nothing in the Ground phase of that turn.

Subject to the above rule, horsemen may be attacked by fighters during the Ground phase (usually through the Charge Attack option).

A horseman in unhorsed at any time during a turn (Horse and Ground phases) when: 1) he receives 13 or more total hits, 2) his strength is reduced by 8 points or more, 3) his strength is 3 or less. The first two criteria are not cumulative from turn to turn, they *are* cumulative within a turn. For example: a horseman receives 7 hits in the Horse phases of two successive turns. He is not unhorsed. If he took 7 hits in the Horse phase, and 7 more in the Ground phase of the same turn, he is unhorsed.

When unhorsed, a man's horse counter is instantly removed from the board and disappears for game purposes. The unhorsed man falls in the hex he was unhorsed in, and drops any shield. If he was armed with a lance (see below) he drops that too, if armed with anything else, he does not drop his weapon.

When a man is unhorsed, he is attacked at the following strengths: 1+2 if in Plate armor, 1-2 if in anything else. Shields do not absorb hits inflicted by the fall, though armor does.

A man unhorsed may be attacked by a second (and more) horseman during the Horse phase in which he was unhorsed. He may also be trampled, though *not* by the rider who unhorses him.

If a rider finishes the Horse phase in SM, he may voluntarily dismount during the Ground phase.

WEAPONRY

Only a horseman (while mounted) may use a lance. Light lances require a ST of at least 11 and do 2 dice damage when the horse is in FM; 1 dice when in SM. Heavy lances require ST of 14, do 3 dice damage in FM; 1+2 in SM. A spear may also be used as a lance, it does 2+2 in FM and normal damage in SM. While being used as a lance, a spear is a one-handed weapon.

When a horseman in FM uses a lance he suffers *no DX penalties due to armor and/or shield.*

Any other non-missile, non-pole, one-hand weapon may be used by a horseman subject to the following: all DX penalties apply, hit results are doubled when in FM.

Specially trained archers may fire light missile weapons (small bow, horse bow, light crossbow) from horses moving in FM at a DX penalty of -5. In SM the penalty is -2. There is no penalty when firing from a horse that does not move in that Horse phase.

A horseman in FM may move into a hex occupied by an unmounted man. Roll a dice when this happens. 1-4 means no effect, and both the horseman and the other remain in the hex. 5 means one dice damage is done to the trampled man. 6 means two dice. Shields do not absorb trampling damage, though armor does. When the trampled man is prone, 2 dice damage is automatic. Remember, if the man to be trampled is approached through his front hexes, he can attack the horseman before the trampling attempt.

If desired, the horse itself, rather than the rider, may be attacked (whether by other horsemen or footsloggers) The procedure is the same, but there is a DX bonus of 1. Horses have ST of 25 and their hide stops 1 hit/attack. Horses may be armored. Light armor stops 2h/a and reduces FM MA to 18. Heavy armor stops 5h/a and reduces FM MA to 15. Every reduction in a horse's ST of 2 points reduced FM MA by 1 point.

The record sheet for a fourteenth century English knight might look like this:

ST = 14
DX = 13 (7) (6)
MA = 4
Hvy. Lance (3)
Broadswd (2)
Dagger (1-1)
Plate 7h
Lg. Sh

Horse ST=25
Lt Arm/18MA

NEWS & PLUGS

GAMING CONVENTIONS:

The bountiful summer of conventions is over, and we face a rather lean winter, but there are two excellent cons scheduled to get us through those cold months.

ROCKCON IV: (October 28-29) Ramada Inn, Rockford, IL. Napleonics, microarmor, D&D, boardgames, painting contest. Membership $1.50 per day, $2.00 for both days (at the door Sat), $1.00 per day under 16.

ORCCON: (January 5-7) California State University at Fullerton. Tournaments, seminars, boardgames, miniatures, prizes, D&D, and auction. Membership $3.50 pre-registered, $5.00 at the door. Make checks payable and send all inquiries to Alan Emrich, 2922 Angler Lane, Los Alamitos, CA 90720.

For a free plug of your convention, send the name, date, and other pertinent information to METAGAMING: Box 15346, Austin, Texas 78761, ATTN: Robert Taylor.

SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS:

Fourth World Fantasy Convention: (October 13-15) Sheraton Hotel, Ft. Worth, Texas. Guest of Honor: Fritz Leiber. Membership $15. Membership will be limited to 750. Info: Mike Templin, 1309 S. West, Arlington, TX 76010.

LOSCON V: (November 3-5) Huntington Sheraton, Pasadena, CA. GoH: Robert Bloch. Membership $8.00 to October 20, $10 after. Info: LOSCON V, c/o Elayne Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills, CA 91344.

PHILCON '78: (December 8-10) Sheraton, Philadelphia, PA. Info: PhilCon '78, c/o Meg Phillips, 210 Londonderry Lane, Darby, PA 19023.

CHATTACON 4: (January 5-7) Sheraton Downtown, Chattanooga, TN. GoH: Alan Dean Foster. Membership $7.00 to December 18, $9.00 after. Info: ChattaCon 4, P.O. Box 21173, Chattanooga, TN 37421.

CLUB MEETINGS:

Schenectady Wargamers Assoc.: The SWA is running a tournament called "The Council of the Five Nations" on October 7-9. For information contact Gerald D. Seypura, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady, NY 12309.

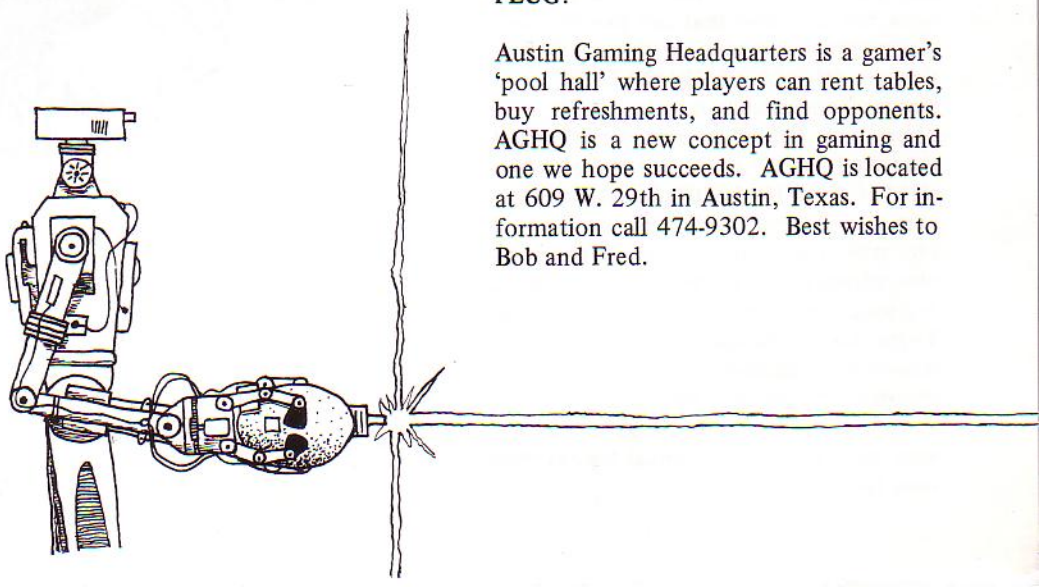
Five Valley Wargamers: These gamers from the far north, but not too far north meet at 236 Dixon, Missoula, Montana 59801.

Palouse Gaming Assoc.: These gamers from the north (the real far north) meet twice monthly at member' homes and once each month at Wildflower Designs, in Moscow, Idaho. For information call 882-1574 or 882-0364.

Ohio Valley Wargaming Assoc.: The OVWA meets Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Evansville, IN at 727 S. Benninghof and Friday at 7:30 at various locations. For information call 985-5759, 479-6328, 424-0593, or 479-1238.

Capital City Gamers: The Austin Wargamers' Club meets every other Saturday at 1 p.m. at the Old Quarry Branch Library, 7501 Village Center Drive, Austin, TX. For information call 452-3923, 444-5003, or 452-7730.

THE SPACE GAMER will gladly give brief mention to clubs that do some SF and fantasy gaming. Send the name of the club, address, and other pertinent information to METAGAMING: BOX 15346, Austin, TX 78761, ATTN: Robert Taylor.



THINGS THAT CAME IN THE MAIL:

THE DRAGON NO. 17: TSR's magazine with articles on a variety of fantasy and SF games. A slick and well produced zine with full color cover and interior art. Single issue $1.50, subs 6/$9. P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

WHITE DWARF NO. 7: Published by Games Workshop, WHITE DWARF is the British equivalent of THE DRAGON with emphasis on D&D and FRP games. Single issue $1.50, subs 6/$12. Games Workshop, 1 Dalling Road, Hammersmith, London W6.

THE APPRENTICE: Canadian magazine devoted to medieval fantasy gaming. A very fine amateur zine that has excellent layout and a number of interesting articles with even a dungeon adventure fold-out. Single issue $1.25, subs 6/$5.50, 24 seguin St., Ottawa, Ontario K1J 6P3, Canada.

SIGNAL: Excellent little news zine covering the hobby. I wish the editor had more time to expand this 'news sheet' because of its high potential. My favorite. Subs 5/$1.00, 2011B St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

THE SILVER EEL: A fantastic one-shot fanzine devoted to Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. Well written, intelligent articles matched with a number of good illos make this a must for Leiber fans. Available for $3.00 by contacting Robert Barger at P.O. Box 8, Evansville, TN 37332.

PLUG:

Austin Gaming Headquarters is a gamer's 'pool hall' where players can rent tables, buy refreshments, and find opponents. AGHQ is a new concept in gaming and one we hope succeeds. AGHQ is located at 609 W. 29th in Austin, Texas. For information call 474-9302. Best wishes to Bob and Fred.

BOOKS

One of the finest SF humor novels has been reprinted after a 24 year lapse. The novel, WHAT MAD UNIVERSE by Fredric Brown, is one of the best comedies of its day. The good news for the many who have not read it is that it is still funny today.

Filled with SF cliché's, WHAT MAD UNIVERSE tells the story of an SF pulp editor who is transported into an alternate universe by the failure of the first moon rocket in 1954. In the alternate universe, he finds that George Yarley had discovered the spacewarp drive with his wife's sewing machine in 1903. Soon after, the galaxy and universe had opened to man. When the hero arrives, he is thrown into the middle of a space war with Arcturians.

The introduction by Philip Klass (William Tenn) is informative and insightful as it sets one's mind to the obvious comparison to ALICE IN WONDERLAND. In fact, WHAT MAD UNIVERSE is a modern, updated ALICE. Keith Winton, the hero, has the same approach to life that makes Alice so dear to the reader's heart. Brown tells us something about ourselves as science fiction readers with this novel. The message is as true today as it was in 1949 when it was first published.

WHAT MAD UNIVERSE by Frederic Brown, Bantam $1.50.

For the average **MELEE/WIZARD** player, there is nothing that adds more to a good time than a batch of miniatures. They are essential to my own play, and I think they are an important part of those that play it often. Now, at long last, a book has appeared that can give the average person a big push in the right direction. MILITARY MINIATURES by Simon Goodenough is a beautiful piece of printing. One of a series of craft books published by Chilton Book Company, MILITARY MINIATURES contain information on history, collecting, assembly of kits, painting techniques, simple and complex conversions, dioramas, and moulding /casting. The price is reasonable at $8.50. There are no fantasy or science fiction miniatures included, but the conversion chapters should give any creative gamer some good ideas about what to do with that old bunch of historical figures they have lying around.

There are many color pictures to illustrate the text. Most segments give good reliable information about metal miniatures. The book is highly recommended to the novice and old pro alike. If nothing else, the great photos show what *can* be done with a little time and effort.

In somewhat of a departure from the normal material covered here, I want to recommend a record. Yes, a record. It is Jeff Wayne's musical version of H.G. Wells' THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. This is a magnificent two record LP narrated by Richard Burton. Although not quite the same as Wells wrote it, WOTW is a kind of rock/radio play with modern interpretations. Included is a 16 page booklet with words, credits, and some great art work. Said to be two and a half years in the making, WOTW is better than most crap on TV, and makes for a fun evening around the stereo.

STARSHIPS & SPACEMEN

a review

by

Richard Bartucci

In recent years, a number of science fiction role-playing games have become available; TSR's **METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA,** FanTac's **SPACE MARINES** and GDW's superlative **TRAVELLER** are only a few. The latest entrant in the field is Fantasy Games Unlimited's **STARSHIPS & SPACEMEN,** written by Capt. Leonard H. Kanterman, M.D., U.S. Army Medical Corps.

While the physical quality of the game booklet is up to FGU's usual high standards, the game itself leaves much to be desired. The game "universe" is inspired by the popular TV series STAR TREK, though perhaps "inspired" is too weak a word; indeed, it *is* the STAR TREK universe with the serial numbers rubbed off and certain names changed to protect the publisher. While freely acknowledging STAR TREK as his starting point, Dr. Kanterman also admits to borrowings from the best of SF (Gordy Dickson, Robert Heinlein) and the worst of Sci-Fi (THE BIONIC MAN, STAR WARS), lifting only the most superficial features form the former and only the most banal from the latter. At one point, he makes bold to suggest a pseudo-PLANET OF THE APES game encounter to prospective players (the gorge rises)

The game mechanics are basically similar to those of **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS,** including encounter tables requiring 20-sided dice, variations in character attributes (read "Inborn Abilities") according to race, and a dungeon master--pardon, a "Starmaster"--to referee.

The role of the Starmaster (SM) is similar to that of the FRP game's dungeon master in that he must be responsible for the actual layout of the arena in which the adventures--pardon again, the "missions"--take place. He must construct the starship in which the player characters serve, map out a sector of the galaxy through which they travel, and provide the players with a detailed description of the objectives of their missions via formalized "briefings" in the form of messages from the Commander of the local Starbase.

In addition to the above, the SM is expected to interpret the rules, control non-player characters both friendly and hostile, run the ship's computer and generally unscrew the inscrutable when necessary.

Gamer familiar with the STAR TREK mythos will find dozens of old friends in **STARSHIPS & SPACEMEN**; the Space Amoeba dispedeses its way through the ether once again even as the "Stone Creature" slithers up to vitrify "NO KILL I" in the rock at your feet. Characters can come down with "Aging Disease" as well as "Space Malaria," or they can have parts of their bodies replaced by "bionic" prosthetics (though the fabled Fusion-Powered Phallus is conspicuous by its absence) Starships are armed with "laser banks" and "ion torpedoes," and their suggested layouts are suspiciously like simplifications of the Federation vessels in Franz Joseph's STAR TREK TECHNICAL MANUAL. Somehow the author forgot to include Tribbles.

Mild flashes of originality are evident, principally in the Andromedans, a telepathic race of humanoids divided into three sexes and notable for their tendency to molt three times a year, becoming invisible for the 3-day duration of their molting period.

Non-sentient alien life forms described in the game appear to be drawn either from the STAR TREK plenum (the "Stone Creature"), popular SF ("Sand Dragons," nee Sandworms), or Wishful Thinking (Giant Spiders, Flying Dogs, Psionic Porcupines) In this last category, Dr. Kanterman displays, for a physician, a disturbing lack of familiarity with such basic principles of biology as the inverse-square law. Also, he exhibits an earth-centered chauvanism; just about everything not borrowed outright from STAR TREK or SF is derived from extinct or existing terran species.

In his descriptions of sentient life the author provides only humanoids, betraying the superficiality of his acquaintence with science fiction as a whole. Where are the Diomedans of Poul Anderson's WAR OF THE WING MEN? What about Larry Niven's Bandersnatchi, Heinlein's Venusian Dragons, Laumer's Lumbagans?

As in **D&D,** success depends on the accumulation of experience points earned for achievements in a character's branch of Star Fleet Service. An officer in the Command Subclass of the Military Branch, for example, would receive EP's for overcoming adversaries and completing missions. A Medical Officer would be credit for characterization and control of diseases that break out in the course of a mission, while a Technical Branch officer receives EP's for the swift and efficient completion of the missions in which he participates. Promotion in Star Fleet is based entirely on a rigid schedule of experience point levels reminiscent of **D&D**; anyone for a 9th Level Science Officer?

With all of the SF genre to draw upon, Dr. Kanterman has restricted himself almost entirely to a universe that has been so thoroughly explored and documented that further exposition is wearisome. Where Redmond Simonson of SPI has devised a rich and original plenum for his **StarForce** trilogy, where Metagaming has dipped into the manifold worlds of Keith Laumer, Poul Anderson and Joe Haldeman for inspiration, and where Marc Miller of GDW has devised the elegant and versatile game system of **TRAVELLER,** it is galling to see such a mishmosh of warmed-over Sci-Fi and **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** foisted on the gaming public.

STARSHIPS & SPACEMEN (81pp) is available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc., P.O. Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11576 for $7.00 postpaid.

MAYDAY

a review
by
Tony Zamparutti

Most space games are about large ships in battles between worlds or galactic empires. However, Game Designer's Workshop's latest science fiction game, **MAYDAY**, is about battles between small spaceships--the largest ship in the game weighs only 800 tons. **MAYDAY** is designed to go with GDW's very popular role-playing game, **TRAVELLER.** The design of **MAYDAY** is based largely on the miniature rules in the second booklet of **TRAVELLER,** and also on another previous GDW game, **TRIPLANETARY.**

MAYDAY contains an eight-page rule booklet, four geomorphic 8½ x 11 map sheets, and about 150 die-cut counters of ships, missiles, and planets. The rule book cover (which is also the game cover, since **MAYDAY** is packaged in a plastic zip-lock bag) depicts a spaceship that resembels the hulk of an F-4 Phantom after it had been attacked by a horde of souvenir hunters. (Ever notice how many spaceships look like airplanes?) The only other artwork in the game is the silhouettes on the counters. All of the ships have the same silhouette on them (it resembles the X-wing fighter in Star Wars). The rule booklet is easy to read, and there are few problems in the rules. The scenario instructions, on the other hand, are very vague; many neglect to tell you just where the ships start. Over all, the components of **MAYDAY** are of high quality.

The scale in **MAYDAY** is fairly large in comparison to the small ship sizes--each hex is one light-second in size (about 186,000 miles) and each turn is the equivalent of 100 minutes. In comparison, the **TRAVELLER** miniature rules on which the game is based have 10 minute turns, while each inch represents 1000 miles. The large scale of **MAYDAY** makes some rules seem ridiculous, such as the boarding rule, or the collison rule, which states that if two ships are in the same hex at the same time they may collide. This seems a little odd considering the scale of the game.

The turn sequence in **MAYDAY** is fairly standard, with movement followed by combat in each player-turn. However, there are also phases for return fire, programming ships' computers, and launching missiles.

The movement, as in many space games, is only two-dimensional. But, the game does use a system drawn from **TRIPLANETARY** for acceleration, inertia, and their effects on a ship's course. However, **MAYDAY's** system is applied much differently from the grease pencils used in **TRIPLANETARY.** To record movement, each ship in **MAYDAY** has three counters. One marks the ship's past position (the last turn's position), another, its present position, and the third, its future position (next turn's). When a ship is moved, the present position counter is then placed in the hex in which the ship would be if it continued its present course (which is marked by the other two counters). The future counter can be shifted one or more hexes (depending on the ship's acceleration) to signify a course change. This easy system is fairly effective in showing the effects of velocity and inertia. The three counters per ship can make things a little confusing for the first game or so, but players will be able to get used to it. The system is easier (in some ways) than the constant grease pencil writing in **TRIPLANETARY.** In a large battle in that game, the board could get quite messy.

Combat in **MAYDAY** is drawn almost directly from **TRAVELLER.** The weapons used are lasers and missiles. Lasers do not differ in power between the smaller and larger ships in the game; more powerful ships just carry more lasers. Missiles are described in detail: there are several different kinds of guidance, propulsion, and detonation systems for missiles. These can be combined in various ways to make sort of *custom-designed* missiles.

Ship computers and their programming form a very important part of the game. The computer rules are also drawn from **TRAVELLER,** although they are modified slightly. Each ship has a computer which has storage and CPU (Central Processing Unit) sizes. These computers are fitted with various programs to do essential jobs in controlling the ship. For instance, the program "Maneuver" is needed for the ship to make any course changes. Programs are placed in the storage, and are moved into the CPU for execution. The programs in the CPU can only be changed at the end of the player-turn, so players need to anticipate which programs they will need the following turn.

Battles in **MAYDAY** involve a lot of maneuvering. Unlike **TRIPLANETARY,** players do not have to worry about running low on fuel, but programming ships' computers does keep them busy. Combat involves a hit table which determines which part of the ship has been disabled. These hits can be repaired indefinitely (God knows how . . .), and the only way to destroy a spaceship is to hit it four times in one turn (or three times in three successive turns). Thus, it is not very easy to disable an enemy. Unless of course you try to board his ship.

By itself, **MAYDAY** is not that exciting of a game. Although its movement system is innovative, the game as a whole is not as good as many other tactical space games, such as **ALPHA OMEGA,** or the tactical game of **BATTLEFLEET: MARS.** The rules could use some polishing in places, and more attention could have been given to the various scenarios. However, **MAYDAY** should make a fairly good game for owners of **TRAVELLER** who do not want to bother with the miniature rules in that game, or who want to have an expansion of the missile rules in **TRAVELLER.** which were glossed over. For that matter, **MAYDAY** might be pretty good for some of the other space role-playing games on the market.

MAYDAY was designed by Marc W. Miller, and is sold by Game Designer's Workshop, 203 North Street, Normal, Illinois 61761 for $5.

PLAYTEST

by **Brian McCue**

Grobut paused to eat the eggshell out of which he had just hatched. Then he started moving up the tunnel, driven by a force which cried "Up: Up:" As he climbed, he felt his nervous system joining the Web, a union of minds which included all the insects in his hive. Gradually, he learned of the situation facing the hive: the eternal war for food was going badly, and he was their current hope. Genetic engineering and a carefully administered regime of nutrition during his larval stage had made him into a totally new kind of warrior. The huge shell he wore on his back could be shed in an instant, whereupon his legs, now almost buckling under his body weight, would come into their own as powerful propulsive limbs and carry him across the battlefield to a weak area, or back to the hive with a load of food. But before that, with the shell still in place, he could (and would have to) use it as a shield while fighting the powerful warriors of the hive across the valley. If he succeeded in battle and returned shieldless to the hive he would be deemed a successful prototype. Although no longer fit for combat, he could look forward to many pleasant Cycles as breeding stock, injecting his genetic material into queens to shape new warriors in his own form.

He reached the door of his hive. The immobile but invincible guards raised their mandibles to let him pass. Once in the open, he began getting signals over the Web. "Left. Forward. Remember that the best way to kill a Pincher is to step on its head." Ahead, a Rammer broke cover and raced straight for him. Grobut withdrew into his shell and took the hit without damage. Then he simply rolled over, crushing the Rammer. Ahead, he could see the enemy Basics gathering all kinds of warrior breeds, ready to find out which one best opposed the new threat Grobut represented . . .

Lt. Higdon leaned back in his chair.

"Looks like a unit type I haven't seen before," he said as he picked up his scratch pad and looked through his notes.

"That's HiveWar for you," answered Lt. O'Malley. He read aloud from the back of the rulebook: "In HiveWar, new from Microgaming Concepts, you can design your own insect warriors and control them in their eternal war for food. There are over 1,786 possible combinations from which to choose . . . "

"I know, I know." Higdon was now hunched over the board, pondering his move. Using the eraser end of his pencil, he advanced most of his units. O'Malley moved Grobut ahead two hexes, into the ZOC of several units. As he was reaching for the die, the barracks intercom

squawked into life.

"ALL GEV CREWS REPORT TO VEHICLES. HOSTILE UNITS TO THE NORTH. ALL GEV CREWS REPORT. ."

Lieutenants Higdon and O'Malley grabbed their helmets and raced out the door. Once inside their GEV, they started the engine and raised the vehicle on its cushion of air. As soon as Captain Burgess was aboard, they headed north.

Burgess' voice sounded in the headphones. "There's an Ogre up in the hills coming this way. The howitzers are pounding it now, but we have to get to it and stop it before it runs them over."

Lt. O'Malley knew the tactic of massive GEV defense well, and glumly contemplated the high losses usually sustained when fighting Ogres . . .

Dorothy Hertz looked up from the mapboard at her opponent, Thorsbit Duncan.

"So now," she said, "your swarms of GEVs will mob my Ogre, darting in and out until they've bombarded it to bits, or even ramming it in order to deprive it of its last few movement points."

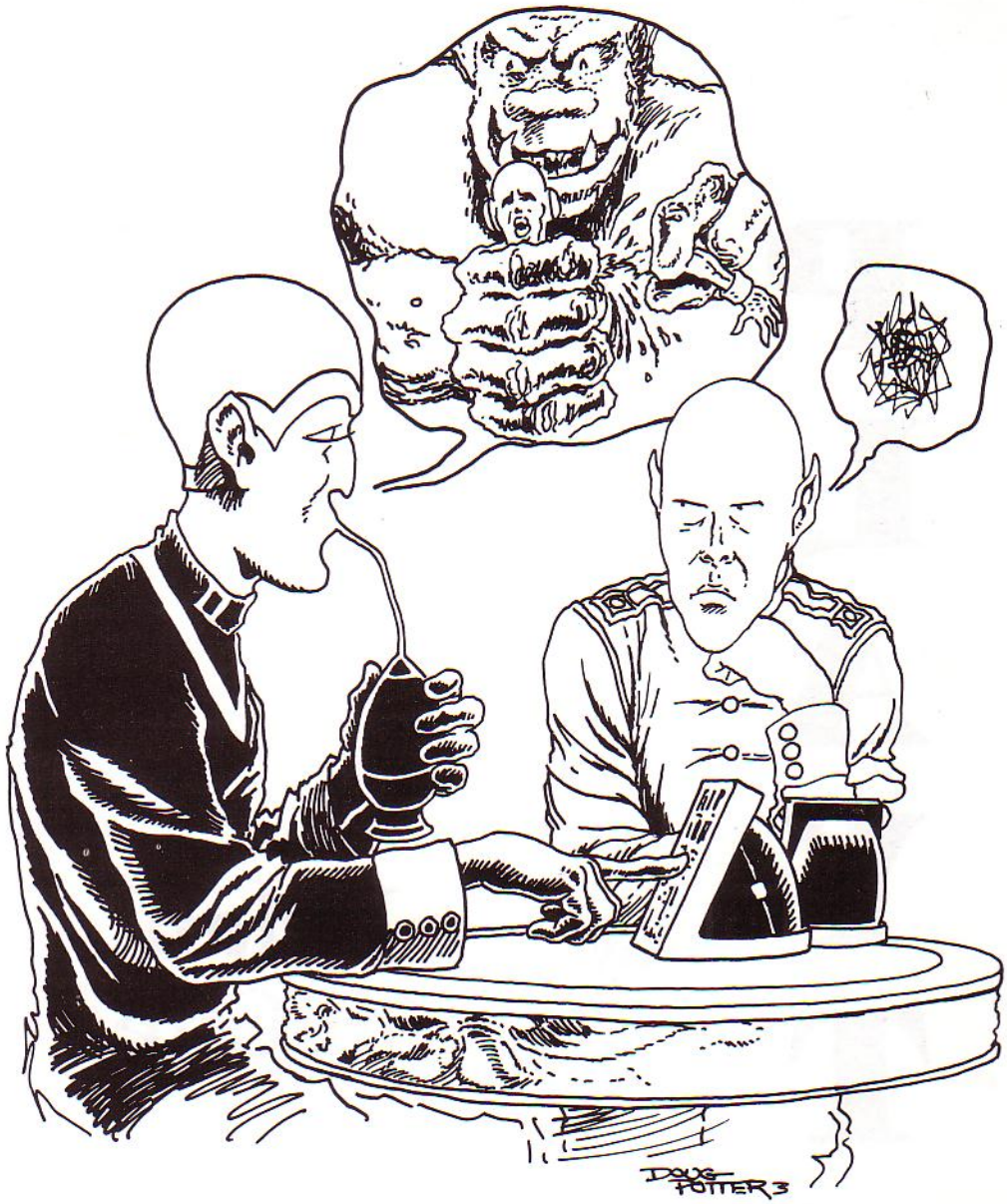
She turned ninety degress and lay down, so that instead of sitting on the sofa she was lying on it with her head on one armrest and her feet on the other. Only a leggy girl could do that.

"Thor, I'm having a little bit of trouble getting into this game. Let's just relax and listen to some records."

"Fine." He stopped counting hexes and dropped Capt. Burgess' GEV on the map.

Dorothy had met Thor at BigCon, and had been playing wargames with him ever since. Lately, she had found that Thor was occupying more of her attention than the games, a bad reflection on the games in that she had never felt much attraction towards men. Duncan for his part, could scarcely believe that such an attractive woman would take any interest in him and was therefore trying to ignore all indications and concentrate on the games instead . . .

Out in the open, purple sun, Oripahs ran his tentacles over the keyboard, sending his move to the master computer. Like many of his vacuum-dwelling race, he enjoyed fantasy role-playing games involving alien life-forms. Currently he was playing Projects & Passions, a game dealing with carbon-controlled, like the Earth weather, to provide a backdrop for the characters taken on by the players. Oripahs levitated to a height of one meter above the rocky planet, so as to absorb more reflected heat along with his direct sunshine.



His keyboard flashed. "Planner Oripahs," it blinked, "your recreation segment is over. You must go back to work now."

Oripahs tentacled the Acknowledge stud.

"Planner Oripahs." the keyboard resumed, "consider the idea of mining minerals by orbiting a large planetoid near the Sun. If sufficient spin were applied, the denser metals would sink to the outside while the planetoid would melt to slag. Then, when it cooled off . . ."

Oripahs watched the board with only five eyes. He realized that he was being asked to make yet another decision beyond his competence . . .

Computer Z-89-10 terminated Simulation 10010, having concluded that the vacuum-dwelling society could never support enough members to allow the specialization needed for a truly advanced technology. The subroutine Oripahs, representing a community planner, was entirely typical in that it was constantly subjected to overdemand. Perhaps the whole vacuum society would have to be rewritten at a lower technology lever. Z-89-10 cleared memory space for the new project . . .

He contemplated the idea of Z-89-10 often, much as one envisions a sheet of paper when doing mental arithmetic. In his mental computer, he created worlds and beings, and saw that some were good. But now, one of the others, Satan, a high-level being created long ago, came forward to do battle . . .

LETTERS

I must disagree with Tony Van Liew when, in his review of **INVASION: AMERICA,** he states that the lack of a provision for an invasion of AK across the Bering Straits is a "defect". The reason this provision was probably not included is that once an invasion is made (assuming a suitable beach is found that can support the amphibious landing of a large body of troops), the question remains: "What the hell do we do next?". In real life, the invading forces would face a long march across some of the worst terrain in the world before coming to any large collection of humanity. And, if that march had to be made in the winter (with chill factors between -10°F and -70°F) . . . well, you see what I mean. Tough work, at the very least.

But, assuming the march is made and the army arrives pretty much intact at, let's say, Anchorage, the question still remains. The invading leadership would be faced with either another march or another landing--this time in the face of whatever opposition the Canadians put up and with the American "Player" able to watch every move and use his rail transportation to ferry reserves of fresh troops to meet the threat head on. As you can see, a Bering Strait invasion is not too practical. The attrition on the forces involved would be great, it would serve no real purpose, and would tie up another army just to keep the invading force in bullets and toilet paper.

Aside from this, I found the review to be fairly good (speaking as one who has spent a few sleepless nights trying to wrest Seattle and Los Angeles from the American Player while he whistles and counters every thrust). SPI, dispite an occasional bummer once in a while, puts out excellent games and it is nice to see you consider them on their own merits and not confining yourselves to just another "house organ".

Allen Evans
Fairbanks, AK

Why in the hell do you plan to review **PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING, SUPER-HERO 44,** and **OBJECTIVE: MOSCOW?** (At least **SUPERHERO 44** is speculative fiction--**OBJECTIVE: MOSCOW** is closer to present/near future rather than speculative fiction).

Why do you insist on insulting speculative fiction fans with a damn guerrilla warfare game? If this was set in the far future using advanced weaponry, that's fine! But a present/near future presentation is not needed (or desired).

Your publisher, Howard Thompson, writes on Page 3 of **TSG** 17 that Metagaming "wants to be the voice and source for science fiction gaming." Noble idea, but with **STICKS & STONES, COUP,** and **ICEWAR,** Metagaming will never reach its aspired goal.

David Scott Lewis
Los Angeles, CA

Although I have been receiving **TSG** for only a short time now, I am writing to tell you that I thoroughly enjoy your publication, as much as I have enjoyed playing MicroGames.

In particular, I like your inclusion of *News & Plugs*, and your dedication of at least one page each issue dealing with the current policies and activities of **TSG** and Metagaming.

I am afraid that I must take violent exception to the letter of Mr. Allen Varney in **TSG** No. 16. He makes the statement,

> *" . . . I have been giving long and serious thought to a recent development in the pages of your chief competitor, TSR's THE DRAGON: namely, their new game-in-every-issue practice . . . "*

By this statement, he refers to SNIT SMASHING and SNIT'S REVENGE, although he would have your readers believe that a third game, SNIT MENO-PAUSE, was also published.

If Mr. Varney had spent some of the time he used for "long and serious thought" in the reading of the magazine, he would have found the statement of the publishers which mentioned that, while they were firmly against a game-per-issue practice, they were including the two games as a bonus to the readers. And indeed, that they included such games only as a form of parody, and not with the serious intent that any should play them. That the games became popular with the fungamer was accidental.

I am sure that at this time Mr. Varney is writing letters to **Moves** and **The General,** descrying **TSG** and MicroGames. As a subscriber to **The Dragon** as well as **The Space Gamer,** I feel that each publication contributes to my enjoyment of wargaming and I have no intention of dropping my subscription to either in the near future.

Michael McCrery
Philadelphia, PA

A comment on WHERE WE'RE GOING ISSUE 16 of The Space Gamer

I would like to comment on an article printed in issue 16 of THE SPACE GAMER. In an article, *WHERE WE'RE GOING,* by Howard Thompson, it stated: "By 1983 SPI, Avalon Hill, Mini-Figs, Heritage, TSR and Metagaming will be the dominant companies." I am not meaning to put your company down, but that is a very snide remark.

Consider:

1. a lack of games available

Other companies produce new games at a much faster rate allowing a faster rate of expansion.

2. a lack of larger games

Games like **STELLAR CONQUEST** and **MONSTER, MONSTERS** that have high quality work and interest are those that bring in all the money. Sure the Microgames are good, are you going to depend on them? How long do you think the interest will last? Can you handle the work of keeping up?

3. a lack of diversity

Your company is oriented toward science fiction and fantasy. This is a rather restricting field. Rapid expansion is restricted, by how much I cannot say. It depends on the setting and the accompaning circumstances. You, of all people, should know that new and innovative ideas must be developed for new games or it might become a bit stale. Do you have the people available for this?

You would hardly be even close to the first step toward being a dominant company by 1983, the way your company is heading. Sure, in the future you may be BIG, but that does not mean you will be able to be a dominant at that time. There is a difference between being dominant and well-established. As the article says "firms currently larger than Metagaming will no doubt get a good laugh . . . " out of this, no wonder, it is absurd. Well . . . almost absurd. Due to the author's loyalty to your company, Metagaming, I will concede on that point.

Do not condemn me for this, that is the way it looks to me. Of course, I could be wasting my breath. It is possible I could have misinterpreted the article and all this is futile. If so, . . . boy, is my face red!

Again, if it is not futile, and my interpretation is correct, it is a different ball game. If I am wrong in this case, I submit myself to any name-calling by Meta-

gaming in good nature. However, you will have to wait about five years to do that . . . it is still early in the ball game.

Business has various tactical overtones. However, because of a diversity of influencing factors, long range planning as such in **STELLAR CONQUEST** is well advised. Lack of foresight can lead to disastrous results over a long term basis. This proves that the ramifications of an emphasis of tactical motives are insidious and anti-progressive, so strategically speaking . . .

. . . Philip Chiu

Like Greg Stafford, who felt compelled to rebut an unfair letter, in TSG No. 17, so I must rebut a letter by E. Duke Whedbee which appeared in that issue, concerning the game **LORDS OF VALETIA** which I have taken over.

Mr. Whedbee wrote you at the time he first wrote to the GAMESMASTERS PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION, but before he received our reply. Consequently, he has been taken through the registration process and was a player by the time TSG 17 appeared; his comments, and the implication that LOV or GPA were not worth anyone's money, were no longer valid.

Due to this I must agree with him that *The Space Gamer* staff has a responsibility to check out articles and letters before publication, before you become a party to actionable slander, not to mention reader distrust.

Like Mr. Stafford, I further wish to vindicate my product.

What was related is partially true. After Ans Varkus folded, RB&B Design Operations followed a very tough road, and there were many delays and forgotten players, of which I was one. Early in 1978 I wrote to them to find out if they wished to transfer the game to GPA and I enclosed a check with my opening figure. To my surprise and later suspicion my offer was accepted without any discussion or price-haggling. An immediate notice was mailed by RB&B so that I was receiving players' orders before I had any of the game materials, which trickled in shortly thereafter. What I received was incomplete and there were no instructions on running the game itself. After three weeks had passed I bashed together a system to determine encounters for the moment and finished the turn, when the late encounters came back, after 6 weeks. In mid-May the first GPA mailing went out.

During the second turn, which has also taken 6 weeks, I heard from Mr. Ronco of RB&B telling me that there were no more materials or instructions; from former associates, who provided me with one system (for awarding points at Armory); and the original designer (pen name Ans Varkus) who explained the whole mess.

It seems that Ans was so anxious to get his game running that he advertised it when it was only half developed-materials wise, and the adjudication system was all in his head. Due to this, and the large response, he turned it over to some friends (RB&B) who were then college students and not really able to spare the amount of time needed. The creative role was left to the creator and, true to form, he procrastinated on every project, producing little. In all of that time (two years this summer) only one small example of combat had ever been committed to paper. When this was turned over to me, I effectively got 400 players and a few odd materials, and am now forced to design a game virtually from scratch. Further, the players seem to expect me to do this instantaneously.

Am I God? In TSG 17 Steve Jackson points out his time problems with **LABYRINTH:** "When it began to look as though we'd have to make a choice between 'polished' and 'on time', the deadline went out the window." You think I don't have these problems? Developing **LOV** properly will take time, therefore, on top of everything else, **LOV** is to be delayed until it is finished.

Among other things adding to my workload is that I must publish issue number one of VALIANCE (the quarterly for **LOV** players) virtually alone. And, Brian Esterson's article in TSG generated so much interest that what I thought was an adequate supply of 2nd Edition rulebooks has run entirely out! I must now write and publish the 3rd Edition rules sooner than I had planned. (God, for some writers and illustrators!)

So the problems Mr. Whedbee complains of were due to people trying to run an undeveloped game in a jury-rigged fashion. I intend to change all that, and given some time, I will. If he could wait a year for a game he thought was worth it, certainly he can allow me a couple of more months.

Unfortunately, the US Postal Disservice being what it is, and the rates having gone up prohibit me from sending out a notice before the end of July, so that anyone who misses it, but has signed up for **LOV** and not been registered yet should patiently await the new Rulebooks.

W. Elmer Hinton, Jr.
Director, GPA
Gamesmaster, LOV

I read with interest Duke Whedbee's letter about **LOV** in **TSG** No. 17 and have to admit that is at least partially right. When I wrote the review that appeared in No.15, **LOV** had been running smoothly for approximately nine months. A week after I submitted the review I received word that Design Operations had folded and the game was being picked up by Game Masters Publishing Association. That very afternoon I shot a post card to Austin telling Metagaming of the situation. It was probably too late, as No. 15 arrived less than two weeks later.

I would like to emphasize that there were absolutely no signs (late turns, etc.) of the game's impending second demise. If there were, I would have held the review back until the situation clarified itself. The reason I have not sent anything to date is because GPA has not, as yet, sent anything back since the initial letter stating that he was picking up the game. (He mentioned that he was having difficulty in getting the materials from D.O. which may be the cause of the delay.) In any event, I will not (and cannot) be saying anything about the new company until it does *something*, positive or negative.

I'm sorry if I was the agent for losing Duke's twenty bucks, but I doubt if there was a deliberate ripoff here; merely people getting into something over their heads. This, of course, does not make the loss any smaller. I *do* resent, however, Duke's statement about Metagaming's responsibility *"to check out reveiws and reviewers before publishing them"* which would seem to imply that I was in cahoots with people out to steal his money. The review was sent in good faith and I have no connection with any of the three companies who have been running, however briefly, **LORDS OF VALETIA.** The only money I've made from the game is the $10 Ben sent me for the review. I assure you I can do a lot better putting in a little overtime.

Brian Esterson
Winter Harbor, Maine

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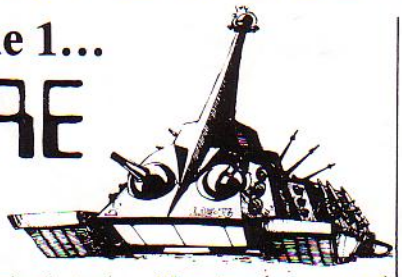

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The OGRE is a robotic tank – 25 meters long, armed with nuclear weapons, incredibly tough, and inhumanly intelligent. This fast-moving game pits *one* Ogre against a large force of "conventional" tanks, hovercraft, and infantry in the year 2085. It's an even match . . .

MicroGame 2...

CHiTiN:I

$2.95 – $2.50 for *TSG* subscribers.

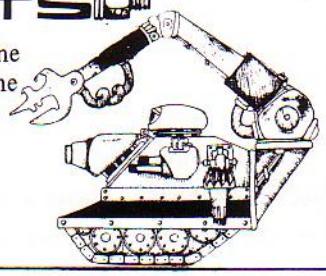
The intelligent insects of the planet Chelan go to war for one reason only. Food. This detailed tactical game pits varying forces of the specially-bred Hymenopteran warrior types against one another. Victory goes to the player who removes the most food – *including enemy bodies* – from the board.

MicroGame 5...

RIVETS

$2.95 – $2.50 for *The Space Gamer* subscribers.

The war is over. Everyone is dead. But nobody told the machines. In RIVETS, two simple-minded computers slug it out, constantly re-programming their idiot robots to kill each other.



MicroGame 4...

WARPWAR

A game of interstellar maneuver and tactical combat. Players design their own ships – each with its own offensive, defensive, and movement capabilities – and battle with a unique *diceless* combat system. To win, you must *outguess* your opponent by anticipating his tactics.

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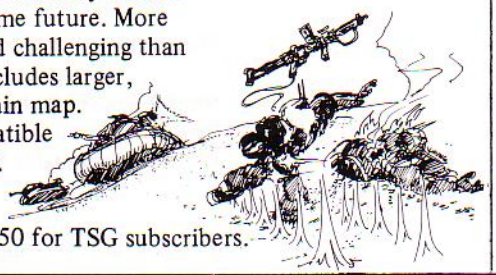
MicroGame 8...

G.E.V.

Sequel to OGRE – a game of armor and infantry combat set in the same future. More complex and challenging than OGRE – includes larger, 2-color terrain map. Fully compatible with OGRE.



$3.95 – $3.50 for TSG subscribers.

MicroGame 7...

The Webbies have taken over Mars – and Earth will be next, unless a daring U.N. raid can crack the Martian tunnels and steal the secret of the WebMind. A challenging tactical game from the designer of *Godsfire.* $2.95, or $2.50 for *TSG* subscribers.

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